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ABSTRACT

The report describes the achievements of a project designed to promote vocational and career development of bilingual handicapped students in inner city high schools through training their parents to be both career educators and advocates for improved services and opportunities. The program used co-trainers who were bilingual/bicultural to conduct parent workshops that involved descriptions of community organizations serving the handicapped, small group activities designed to promote parent competencies in career development, and a formal evaluation of the session. Recommendations from the project are centered on policy issues (including incentives for participation of co-trainers), program procedures (such as format of training co-trainers and selection of workshop sites), and variations of the project for other sites. The bulk of the document is composed of project evaluations, both internal and external, during the project's first 2 years. Internal evaluation included formative week-by-week feedback and summative pre-post data, while external evaluation relied on interviews with parents and co-trainers. Findings are shown to indicate project success in increasing parent knowledge and positive attitudes as well as fostering parent involvement in school vocational and career programming. Among appended materials are sample internal evaluation instruments. (CL)

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TRAINING BILINGUAL PARENTS AS CAREER
EDUCATORS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH

DAVID KATZ, Ph.D.



Institute for Research and Development
in Occupational Education

Center for Advanced Study in Education
The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

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ABSTRACT

This project sought to open wider the doors of vocational and career development of bilingual handicapped students in inner-city high schools by training their parents to be both career educators and protagonists for improved services and opportunities. Through the training process, parents assumed new roles and develop associated competencies that enabled them to augment and support the career development services offered by the school.

In addition, the project fostered an increased capability among bilingual community organizations, parent advocacy groups and schools to deliver career education services to inner-city bilingual special education students. Through a collaborative training effort, bringing together parents, school personnel and community agencies, a parent education-training model was developed that can be disseminated to other bilingual/bicultural communities.

To achieve these goals, the university staff worked on-site with co-trainers from parent advocacy groups, bilingual community organizations and high school special education departments. Collaborating groups involved in the co-training process and/or providing other types of resources included: The National Puerto Rican Forum, ASPIRA, The Puerto Rican Educators Association, The Association for the Help to Retarded Children, The Association for Neurologically Impaired and Brain-Injured Children, The Bronx Organization for Learning Disabled and The United Parents Association of New York City. In addition, support was provided by the Mayor's Office on the Handicapped, and the Chancellor and Executive Director of the Division of Special Education of the New York City public schools.

Over the course of two project years, parents were recruited from 21 high schools where their children were enrolled in special education classes and were trained directly. Workshop content and process took into account that parents are adult learners whose educational experiences range from those with marginal education to those with significant attainment. Thus workshop activity stressed, whenever possible, active parent participation in "learning through doing," with special attention given to capitalizing upon experiences in the home and the community. Provision was made to accommodate the varying language capabilities of parents through the use of interpreters and by subgrouping.

An important outcome of this project was the increased capability of parents to stimulate their children's motivation to become involved in career development activities and give them confidence and support needed in moving into the world and making career choice.

In addition, special attention was devoted to developing parent leadership and advocacy skills that enable parents to reach out to other parents of handicapped children and to participate in school programs that promote career education. A cadre of parents received additional advocacy training from the Puerto Rican Manpower and Leadership Training Project, Cornell University in the first year of the project.

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Another goal of this project was to forge a strong working relationship among collaborating community agencies and the schools in a common effort to involve bilingual parents of handicapped youth in a process that enables parents to play a more active role in their children's education. In this regard a significant outcome of the project was the demonstration that non-articulate and unsophisticated inner-city parents can develop advocacy skills on behalf of their children. Parents, many of whom for the first-time realized that they were not alone, have begun network schemes aimed at making changes in the career and vocational programming within their schools.

To increase the impact of the training program, co-trainers have started or are planning to conduct a comparable series of workshops for parents after having participated in the program.

Rather extensive evaluation has been done. Evaluation data were generated from two sources: first from an internal evaluation that included formative week-by-week feedback and summative pre-post data, and second, from external evaluators who conducted many interviews with parents and co-trainers. The evaluation data indicate that the project has succeeded not only in increasing knowledge and understanding and changing attitudes, but also in generating parent activity in the schools and with their children concerning vocational and career development.

This project aimed to "give away" its content and processes-to provide the collaborating organizations with a training model and the know-how to continue working with bilingual parents and schools. In addition, the New York City Board of Education piloted the program on the junior high school level, where it was well received and obtained some significant outcomes.

The body of this report includes the following:

- A description of all training elements connected with the program including a summary of evaluation activities and outcomes and recommendations for future training activities.
- A description of dissemination efforts undertaken by project staff.
- Two internal evaluation reports, one for each project year that describe the impact of the project on trainees and co-trainers.
- Two external evaluation reports prepared by external evaluators.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The central goal of this project was to open wider the doors of vocational and career development of handicapped children in inner-city high schools by training their parents to be both career educators and advocates for improved services and opportunities. Through a training process parents were assisted in assuming new roles and developed associated competencies that would enable them to augment and support the career development services offered by the school.

In addition, the project sought to foster on increased capability among bilingual community organizations, parent advocacy groups and schools to deliver career education services to inner-city bilingual special education students. Through a collaborative training effect bringing together parents, school personnel and community agencies, a parent education training model was developed that can be disseminated to other communities.

To achieve these goals, the university staff worked on-site with co-trainers from parent advocacy groups, bilingual community organizations and high school special education units. Collaborating groups involved in the co-training process and/or providing other types of resources are listed in the appendix.

Over the two-year project period, training programs were conducted for parents in 21 high schools in 4 boroughs of New York City--the Bronx and Manhattan in 1981-82 and Brooklyn and Queens in 1982-83. In consultation with the Superintendent of High Schools in each borough and the lead special education supervisor, the schools and co-trainers were selected. Co-trainers included special educators from the participating schools and representatives of community organizations. The co-trainer staff for each training cycle were interviewed and selected by project staff on the basis of commitment to the project goals, recommendation by their supervisor, and a willingness to maintain the impact of the project after the completion of training.

During each project cycle (two per year) school co-trainers recruited parents of special education students enrolled in their schools. A special effort was made to involve bilingual parents. Since one of the criteria for school selection was a high percentage of bilingual students, the project was able to enroll in three of the four boroughs, a substantial number of bilingual parents.

A typical training cycle consisted of seven-eight planning training sessions conducted by project staff for co-trainers and six parent education workshops. Planning/training sessions were interspersed between workshops, thus providing time for debriefing, making program modifications and developing parent materials.

A typical workshop session included four phases: An informal introductory aspect during which parents met invited resource people informally; a large group aspect where resource people made presentations followed by questions and answers; small group activity led by co-trainers in which parents tried-out career education exercises, discussed their value, and exchanged views on how they would do them at home with their children; the final phase of a workshop focused on "giving testimony." Parents evaluated the session orally, indicated what they had learned and the steps that they were planning to increase their advocacy activity within the school.

Rather extensive evaluation has been done. Evaluation data were generated from two sources; first, from an internal evaluation that included formative week-by-week feedback and summative pre-post data, and second, from external evaluators who conducted in-depth interviews with parents and co-trainers. The evaluation data indicate that the project has succeeded not only in increasing knowledge and understanding and changing attitudes, but also in generating parent activity in the schools and with their children concerning vocational and career development.

One of the most important outcomes of the project is its demonstration that non-articulate and unsophisticated parents can develop career education competencies and advocacy skills on behalf of their children. Parents, many of whom for the first-time realized that they were not alone, have begun network schemes aimed at making changes in the career and vocational programming within their schools.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project Goals

The primary goal of this project was to enable parents to participate maximally in their child's vocational future. In each project year the specific parent-centered objectives were to design and implement a career education-training program that would enable this population of parents to assume a wider range of career education roles:

- o As facilitators of their children's vocational development;
- o As advocates for special career education programs in the public schools in New York City; and
- o As both consumers of and advocates for disabled young people from bilingual/bicultural families.

Subsumed within these objectives was the need to provide parents with the tools they need--the information, support systems, and the confidence that comes with practice--to assume these responsibilities. Other objectives of the program, not as directly related to parent participation in the career education process, included demonstrating the effectiveness of a parent education-training model and fostering a service delivery capability and working relationship among bilingual community organizations, parent advocacy groups, and educational institutions.

Getting Started

In late spring, prior to the start-up for project year one, we met with central office administrators in special education and the high school division of the New York City Board of Education to begin the process of selecting the participating schools for the two project years. With their help, we selected the Bronx as the first borough to receive training. The Bronx, with approximately 55,000 students in 19 high schools, was deemed to be a suitable choice in that many of the schools had

large Hispanic populations and the Superintendent of Bronx High Schools was especially receptive to the training program because project objectives were so congruent with his own goals regarding parent involvement and career and vocational development of special needs students.

The Bronx High School Superintendent convened a meeting of five principals, the borough coordinator of special education and the coordinator of guidance where we presented an overview of the training program and discussed the selection of co-trainers from the designated schools. At the meeting we emphasized the need for co-trainers who had demonstrated good interpersonal skills, had a track record of parent involvement, and who would maintain the impact of the program beyond their cycle of participation by training additional parents in the following year.

Parallel to the meeting with principals, project staff conferred with community organizations for the purpose of selecting co-trainers who would represent their agency. In one instance, a community group selected two people because they wanted to increase the parent-education competencies of their personnel. Since the project focused on training bilingual parents, we made a strong effort to recruit several co-trainers who were proficient in Spanish. For example, one co-trainer represented the Puerto Rican Educators Association; another, representing the United Parents Association was bilingual, a member of a community school board and had a handicapped child. In addition, during the first year of the project, the assistant project director was an experienced bilingual counselor.

The Role of Co-Trainers

Co-trainer responsibilities involved functioning in a variety of roles: as parent recruiter, small group discussion leader, career education specialist and facilitator.

of planning for individual parents and for the organization they represented. Co-trainer competencies in these areas were uneven in that some had little experience in working with parents other than in one-to-one situations. Two had extensive experience in career education; while others had had minimal involvement with career exploration and career development activities. However, despite these gaps, most of the co-trainers expressed and exhibited fairly high levels of confidence in their ability to contribute to the training process and demonstrated much enthusiasm on being offered the opportunity to be a co-trainer.

In almost every training cycle, one or two co-trainers expressed some apprehension concerning their ability to lead a small-group and/or their having limited experience in career education. Notwithstanding these feelings of inadequacy, co-trainers indicated that they would be able to carry through their assigned tasks if given training and supervision by project staff. As one co-trainer said, "I've never done this before but the risk is worth it, not only for myself, but for the help I can provide to parents and my special ed students."

Training The Co-Trainers

To prepare co-trainers for their participation in the program, project staff conducted in each training cycle a series of planning/training sessions. A substantial part of the beginning sessions was preparatory in nature in that it focused on ways of publicising the program, recruiting parents and selecting community groups to disseminate program information. Since the co-trainers represented different schools and/or community groups project staff encouraged a free exchange of information and strategies that would accomplish a crucial task—securing a substantial number of parents to participate.

After the introductory sessions, co-trainer training was conducted bi-weekly,

with each training session preceding a parent workshop. At these co-trainer training sessions, project staff presented a fully developed workshop agenda which spelled out in detail the workshop objectives, anticipated outcomes, resource personnel who would be presenting, large and small group activity, an evaluation format and the precise amount of time to be allocated for each workshop activity. (See appendix for sample agendas).

To reinforce appropriate leader behavior while conducting small-group activity, project staff used each training session as a simulation of an actual workshop with co-trainers acting as parents. As the co-trainers went through an exercise, project staff would process the activity and ask for co-trainer reactions and comments at crucial junctures. Thus, a model of a small-group session was presented that provided the co-trainers with a "coming attraction" and a literal picture of the actual task they would be doing with parents.

After the first parent workshop, each training session included a debriefing of the previous workshop. Project staff asked co-trainers such questions as: What went well? How did the parents respond? What obstacles occurred? How did you overcome them? What unforeseen event happened? How did you respond? How would you have done things differently? How did you deal with the shy parent, the monopolizing parent, the hostile parent?

Since many co-trainers had had little previous experience in conducting small groups or in group dynamics, using the actual parent workshop as the training context was an experiential way of sharpening co-trainer leadership skills. Thus, by the end of a training cycle virtually all of the co-trainers indicated a significant increase in their ability to lead parent groups.

Where co-trainers had doubts initially about their ability to accomplish project

aims--often stated in terms of previous negative experiences in obtaining parental involvement in school activities--they began to modify their perceptions after the first or second workshop. Co-trainers learned that their leadership role did not require them to know all the answers and that by involving parents as active participants, appropriate suggestions and recommendations for problem solving would oftentimes emanate from the group.

In one instance where a co-trainer expressed uncertainty about his/her ability to lead a group, project staff offered her an opportunity to share the role with another trainer for one or two sessions. This co-leading reduced feelings of anxiety and tension and lead to the co-trainer assuming a more relaxed attitude and leading her own group later on.

After each series of workshops, the co-trainers commented on the value of seeing parents in a situation where they shared a common concern. "Very seldom," one teacher commented, "do I get to see parents under pleasant circumstances. In the workshops I wasn't giving bad news or making demands." The co-trainers found that not only did their views of the parents change but the parents' view of them was also altered. Quite a few reported that parents called or stopped at school after the first workshop. This change in perception was expressed by a teacher who spoke to the parents at the last workshop. "Sometimes when I come running in here after doing a full day of teaching I'd wonder why I was doing this," she admitted. "In the beginning I really wasn't sure if it was going to work. But it has worked. More than that I've learned something. It was good for me to see you parents outside of a school setting, to learn about your concerns. What strikes me as important is the love and concern you have for your kids. . . . It's helped me to approach my classroom in a different light. . .it's like I learned to care about them as you do."

Having co-trainers who were bilingual/bicultural was an important variable in training. In addition to their being able to lead a group in Spanish for those parents who were-monolingual, these co-trainers were able to explain and interpret parent behaviors to other co-trainers in terms of their cultural background. "Many in my group are very shy," a bilingual co-trainer told the other group leaders. "They think it's bad manners to question authority, or make demands. It's a cultural thing really. I have to be sensitive to that. What it means to me as a leader is that I have to be sure the questions are asked of the guest speakers, and also that all the hand-outs are received. I know they're going to hesitate about asking you, or making demands of you." As the program progressed, the same leader proudly reported to her colleagues, two of the shyest men in my group stood up after the second session and talked about how they were getting a feeling of support from the group, how they no longer feel alone.

Parent Workshops

In each project year, two cycles of parent training were conducted, one during the fall semester and one in the spring. A cycle consisted of six workshops, each of which followed a format conducive to accomplishing program objectives. A typical workshop sequence most always included the following components:

Phase I. At the beginning of the workshop, project staff and co-trainers greeted early arrivers, introduced parents to resource people and provided parents with an opportunity to discuss individual problems or concerns. The host school provided refreshments which were served by special education students who, in addition, had the responsibility of arranging the room setting. As parents signed attendance sheets they were given reference/resource materials.

Phase II. The next phase was a formal but brief welcome by project staff that

included an overview of workshop activities and an introduction of resource people who would be presenting.* Most often the presentation was in the form of a panel whose members represented a cross-section of community organizations serving the needs of handicapped youth or who provided a variety of generic services most often used by community residents. During this phase of the program, panelists' remarks were translated into Spanish. In several workshops the need for translation was not required in that we were able to secure Spanish-speaking panelists and thus could have a separate but parallel presentation in an adjoining room for those who were monolingual. In this way the time spent for translation was used more productively in expanding presentations and giving more time for questions and answers.

Phase III. The third phase of most workshops was devoted to small-group activity that focused on developing parent competencies in career development and career education areas. In small groups co-trainers explained, demonstrated, and led parents step-by-step through a specific activity that parents themselves would be doing with their children as an at-home assignment. As a guide for conducting the small group, co-trainers followed the working agenda developed by project staff and modified by co-trainers during the planning/training session that preceded each workshop (see appendix for sample agendas). In the small groups, co-trainers encouraged parent interaction by having group participants share their ideas and concerns regarding their children's vocational future including the transition of their children from school to work. After parents had experienced the process, time was spent on parents trying out the activity in dyads--a role-play situation that simulated what they would be doing with their children at home.

*See Appendix for list of agencies, companies, and colleges that presented at workshops.

After the first workshop in each training cycle, co-trainers provided time in the small groups to debrief the outcomes of the at-home assignment. By using questions developed by project staff, co-trainers would ask such questions as: "How did your child respond to the activity? What went well? What road blocks occurred? If you were to do the activity again, how would you change it? What did you learn about your child's interests, values and concerns related to career exploration. It was during this debriefing period that parents soon realized that their concerns, fears and anxieties were commonly held and that they were not alone in their struggle to assist their child in the career development process.

"They got more programs, more agencies now to help our kids." One parent said. "I feel like this one helped me have better communication with my son, Before we never talked." Another parent agreed that she is now better able to talk to her son. Then she added, "I learned that it doesn't stop with the school. There are a lot of places to go but you have to really make demands. Whereas before I felt in the dark, now I know where to go, who to talk to, and how to talk to them." A father added, "Before this program I thought what was in the school was it. But, now I know that there are other things available. And as parents we have to demand them. I learned of a world that I didn't think existed for my son. I never thought he'd be able to work. In all the years he's been in special ed., this is the first time I've had a chance to meet other parents. Special ed. was like a lost tribe. But coming here and meeting other parents opened up a whole new world. I just hope it doesn't stop here."

For parents who were monolingual in Spanish, small groups were led by a bilingual co-trainer. Shy and reticent parents, who had some English-speaking ability, were encouraged to participate in English-speaking groups, thus affording

practice and the associated confidence that emanates from competing equally among peers. Exercise materials were translated into Spanish; however, for the handful of parents who were functionally illiterate in both Spanish and English, co-trainers presented the materials orally in Spanish.

Phase IV. The culminating aspect of every workshop involved a formal evaluation of the session using a protocol that included a checklist and a series of open-ended questions. This activity, plus an informal oral evaluation conducted in the small groups, provided co-trainers with immediate feedback on parents' perceptions of the workshop. In addition, at the end of each work shop, parents reconvened in a large group. Project staff asked parents "to give testimony"---to share with the group: what they had learned, what was new, what made an impact, what they planned to do with their children, with teachers and with school administrators regarding planning career and vocational education activities..

Project staff and co-trainers reinforced positive comments and behaviors by indicating that through individual and/or collective action of parents--newly developed networks, that began on to emanate from the small groups--changes could be made in IEPs, school programs, and support services that would benefit their children.

Parents were encouraged to attend their schools' parents association meetings and to advocate for improved and/or expanded services.

DISSEMINATION

As a result of the interest aroused by this project on the high school level as well as the unmet needs that it highlighted, the New York City Board of Education, in September 1982, supported the development of a pilot training program for parents of special education students at the junior high school level.

The pilot project was similar in functioning to the high school project in terms of participation by trainers of parents from a variety of groups but was keyed to the career development needs of junior high school students.

Participating in the pilot program were two community school districts in East Harlem and the upper west side in Manhattan. Nine junior high schools and four community agencies provided co-trainers for the hundred or more parents who participated.

In addition project staff gave several presentations to several groups including community school boards, the Advisory Commission for Occupational Education of the Handicapped (New York City Board of Education) and special education supervisory staff for Manhattan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon our experience in conducting the training program on the senior high school level over a two-year period and providing leadership for a pilot program on the junior high school for one year leads us to offer several suggestions to those who would like to undertake a similar project.

Policy Issues

When working in cooperation with a large urban school system, a problem that very often confronts the project leader is the decision of determining which schools should be selected to participate. As so often occurs, there are usually several school districts within a school system that could profit from having the project conducted within its area. Moreover, within a school district there are usually a number of schools which could equally benefit from the involvement. One thing we have learned is that it is vital to confer systematically with the lead administrators at each level, beginning with division heads at the central board of education, the superintendent at the local level and the individual principals of schools that will be providing the target population. At each level of conferring, the project staff needs to outline specifically: project goals, program design and activities, management and evaluation procedures and the resources that will be needed in carrying out different components of the project.

In most instances, a district superintendent's enthusiasm for the project can be transmitted to the principals thereby developing a positive set for project implementation.

The matter of incentives for participation as a co-trainer requires careful consideration. Heavily burdened school staff cannot, except in unusual

circumstances, be expected to give the time and energy required by a project such as this one without some compensation, whether in the form of college course credit, inservice credit, stipends for after-school work, or released time.

Program Procedures

The key program procedures that seem essential to this project were: the selection of co-trainer teams, the format of training the co-trainers, the selection of workshop sites and time of day for conducting workshops.

Co-trainers should, if at all possible, meet the following criteria: a tenured and experienced special education teacher or supervisor; good interpersonal skills with students, peers and parents; a willingness to spend time and energy beyond the regular school day; work experience in another field and a commitment to project goals.

Training trainers to be parent educators should follow an active mode with co-trainers simulating roles as parents, students, as well as small-group leaders. This is best accomplished by having project staff conduct a training session as though it were an actual workshop activity. Project staff should be viewed as role models with co-trainers trying out a leader's role after experiencing the situation as a parent. An effective strategy for involving co-trainers is to begin with volunteers followed by each co-trainer assuming a leader's role.

Of much significance is the debriefing of each activity and/or component of an activity by the group as it is conducted by project staff and then by a co-trainer. This processing provides an analysis of techniques and approaches that will best achieve the aim of a small-group activity and, furthermore will often reduce the chances of making errors in the use of time and involvement of parents.

By experiencing a group as an observer and/or role simulator and then

processing the interaction, a co-trainer's anxiety level--usually at atmospheric heights during beginning workshops--is most often allayed.

2
Selecting a workshop site involves a careful analysis of demographic factors and transportation routes. Selecting one site for all workshops, rather than rotating sites seems to be preferable in that many inner-city parents, especially those who have recently arrived in their neighborhoods, find it difficult to negotiate change in the use of public transportation. Selecting a training site that is both centrally located and accessible by bus or subway is essential since few of these parents have automobiles at their disposal. Flyers, letters of invitation and other publicity forms that are distributed initially should carefully detail the public transportation for reaching the training site.

As for the time of day to conduct training, a needs assessment of parents will be somewhat helpful. However, whatever time is chosen, there will be those who cannot attend. If an evening time is considered in order to enhance the likelihood of fathers' participation, then one is confronted with negative feelings regarding night time safety on the streets while waiting for buses and subways. Having training on weekends is similarly perceived as inappropriate in that parents often view this as family time--for leisure, shopping or housecleaning--or for some as another day of work.

Because co-trainers are usually school people who are teaching during the day, having them released from classroom responsibilities for several hours a week is unrealistic from an administrative or economic view. Providing teachers with released time is something that school principals might do on a "one-shot" basis but, expecting that it be done for 12 weeks is unrealistic. Thus, having training within an hour after the end of school day seems to be best in that it allows time for co-

trainers to travel from their home schools and parents to make provision for the supervision of their children after coming home from school.

Variations

Some schools should be able to conduct a project similar to this one and replicate a parent training program through a team effort that emanates from the community school district superintendent's office. With the leadership of the district special education supervisor and guidance coordinator using a manual--ideally prepared by the CUNY staff of this project--a training of trainers program could be organized in all schools. Ideally this effort would be complemented by the CUNY team in face-to-face training sessions or workshops. However, a second-best method of communicating content and process would be a videotape in which CUNY staff would illustrate as much as possible of the events comprising a face-to-face workshop, including modeling group leadership behavior, and demonstration of the actual conduct of large-group and small-group activities.

The manual itself would include specific content about career development, the world of work, typical agency services available to special education students, typical resources in schools, colleges and agencies, definitions of IEPs, COHs, and the various procedures involved in assessment and placement of special education students, a summary of pertinent legal aspects, and other information of the type that has been transmitted in written and oral form during the six-session workshop series in this project.

The manual would also contain a section describing instructional and group processes as used in these workshops. Few teachers have much of the understanding or skill needed to use small groups in an informed manner to focus on personal matters that include perceptions, feelings, attitudes, values and opinions.

The manual would explain in detail each of the experimental activities used in this project--the Career Inventory, The Picture Sort, and the Values Exercise, as well as suggesting others that might be used and listings references for further information. Samples of completed forms would be included, and examples of the kinds of questions-and-answer interchanges that trainers and parents could engage in when reviewing a form that has been filled out by a parent or child.

Session-by-session outlines would be offered--in effect an elaboration of the "agendas" with full explanations of how to prepare for each session, what materials to have ready, and suggestions of the types of speakers and resource people one could invite to each session.

Finally, the manual would contain specific suggestions for evaluating each session and the entire series. Evaluation forms and their use would be illustrated and explained.

With this kind of manual and either an accompanying videotape or (film) or an actual series of training sessions for the trainers, it should be possible for every school district to offer parent training of this kind. To be successful, the enterprise in any given school should have the full endorsement and support of the district superintendent, principals, the special education faculty, the PTA, and pertinent agencies. Furthermore, the district's guidance office contains resources that could be invaluable to this parent education program.

TRAINING BILINGUAL PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS
FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH, 1981-82

INTERNAL EVALUATION
Project Period I

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TRAINING BILINGUAL PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH, 1981-82

This report summarizes outcomes of the first year (1981-82) of the "Bilingual Parents as Career Educators" project. The evaluation reported on herein, conducted by a small team of staff people, is intended to supplement the description of the project's implementation and the examination by the external evaluator. The primary purpose of this internal evaluation was to provide the program developers with feedback about the project as it unfolded, and its focus was on the day-to-day operation—notably, the preparation of the co-trainers and the functioning of the parent workshop groups. Also included is some data describing the program's impact on the participants. The findings are based on information from three sources: observations of the sessions for parents; data collected from and about the co-trainers at the beginning and end of each of the two implementation cycles; and parent participants' attitudes, knowledge, and reactions obtained from questionnaires they completed before and after the program and from rating forms administered after each session.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

A brief description of the project's goals, objectives, and implementation design, which follows, provides the framework for assessing how positive the results were: participating parents and trainers alike benefitted enormously and in interesting and serendipitous ways.

Project Goals

The Parents-as-Career Educators project builds on parents' natural role as teachers of their own children by offering them the support, information, and select interpersonal skills to better equip them to play an active, productive part in the vocational development of their children. It is directed to a here-to-fore relatively neglected population—bilingual, disadvantaged parents of disabled high school-aged youngsters.

While it has been assumed, and research supports the contention that parents are a major influence on a child's career development, parent involvement in the educative process in general (and in career education in particular) has tended to be both informal and sporadic. This is no more true than when the child is both disabled and from an inner-city family where English is not the primary language: the handicapping

condition often means that this child, more so than the able-bodied child, lacks a clear sense of self in relation to the vocational world; and the economic disadvantage and the language barriers experienced by bilingual parents often translates into a lack of information, contacts, and ease of coping with schools, agencies, and other institutions which exist to serve them. Together these factors work against the full realization of the child's potential. The primary goal of this project was to enable parents to participate maximally in their child's vocational future.

For the project's first year, the specific parent-centered objectives were to design and implement a career education-training program that would enable this population of parents to assume a wider range of career education roles:

- as facilitators of their children's vocational development;
- as advocates for special career education programs in the public high schools in New York City; and
- as both consumers of and advocates for community-based, vocationally-related services for disabled young people from bilingual/bicultural families.

Subsumed within these objectives was the need to provide parents with the tools they need--the information, support systems, and the confidence that comes with practice--to assume these responsibilities. (Other objectives of the program, not as directly related to parent participation in the career education process, included demonstrating the effectiveness of a parent education-training model and fostering a service delivery capability and working relationship among bilingual community organizations, parent advocacy groups for the handicapped, and educational institutions.)

Project Design

To carry out the goals, the project was designed to involve groups of parents in a series of six, two and one-half hour workshop sessions in which they would be presented with: information from and about community-based organizations that serve the disabled, from and about bilingual advocacy groups that could be marshalled in support of the disabled, and from and about the public educational systems (secondary and postsecondary level) with the mandate to provide this population of learners with career opportunities; a knowledge of career development and an understanding of the factors involved in successful and satisfying career choice; practice in specific activities that could be used with their own children; and exposure to other parents with similar backgrounds and problems, as well as the opportunity to interact with representatives of agencies, organizations, and institutions in a congenial and supportive environment.

The program was planned for parents of handicapped children enrolled in 10 public high schools, five in each of two boroughs of New York City: South Bronx, Theodore Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, William Taft, and James Monroe high schools in the Bronx, and Martin Luther King, Jr., Seward Park, Julia Richmond, George Washington, and Louis D. Brandeis high schools in Manhattan. The two series ran consecutively, with the first cycle being conducted in the Bronx.

Each cycle was comprised of two interrelated components: a leadership training program for the small-group leaders—the co-trainers—and an education program for parents. One of each pair of co-trainers that led the small group parent activities was selected from the participating high schools, while the other was chosen from community or parent advocacy organizations: National Puerto Rican Forum, United Parents Association, Casita Maria, Inc., A.H.R.C., and the Puerto Rican Educators Association. After initial orientation to the program, in each cycle the co-trainers were convened prior to each parent session at which time the project staff worked them with on the activities at which parents would engage. Thus, co-trainers were briefed just prior to the session they would be conducting, with the net effect that the concepts and techniques they were to convey were fresh in their minds. Given the backgrounds of the co-trainers and the complexity of the leadership task, this format proved very effective.

As noted, each parent cycle consisted of a total of six sessions involving all parents from the five schools in the borough. Five sessions were scheduled at weekly intervals, and with one or two exceptions, the schedule was adhered to. The last session, which took place at the end of the second cycle, involved parents and trainers from the Bronx and Manhattan. The parent meetings took place at the most centrally located of the participating schools in each borough; these two sites acted as hosts to the co-leader training as well.

A total of 101 different parents, almost equally divided between the Bronx and Manhattan, attended at least one session. Each cycle had a dedicated coterie of parents who came to all sessions—15 Bronx parents and 17 Manhattan parents—with the large majority of the others attending more than two times. Parents were recruited by the co-trainers representing the high schools, who focused their efforts on parents of children in their own special education classes. Once identified, parents were encouraged to find other parents of similarly-aged disabled students. A great deal of work went into recruiting parents and into assuring their continuous attendance: it was not uncommon for these parents, almost all of whom were women, not to have ventured out of their own neighborhoods.

The participating parents were diverse. Predominantly female, the majority were Hispanic; except for one or two White parents, the others were Black. Although there was no data collected, the impression is that they were all economically disadvantaged—the Bronx group more severely so—with minimal formal education. Their comments also made it apparent that single heads of households (males as well as females) were overrepresented. Somewhat more than half were employed outside the home, typically in occupations requiring lower-level skills; for the most part, the men worked at semi-skilled occupations, although there were exceptions, while the women tended to be employed in unskilled jobs. Their high-school aged disabled child, invariably one of several children, typically had a learning disability or physical handicap. From these demographics, it is apparent that the project not only enlisted an appropriate audience, but one dramatically in need of service: to a great extent, the parents were more disadvantaged than had been anticipated.

Project Implementation

The sessions for parents generally followed a similar format: during the initial social period (at which coffee, tea, and cookies were available), tables were also set up and staffed by representatives of various agencies and organizations. Parents were encouraged to mingle and to seek out a community, educational, or parent advocacy representative that could provide advice and materials (usually available in Spanish and in English) of benefit to them and their child. Despite the fact that this activity was well rated by parents, this part of the session did not accord with expectation. As a group, the parents were extremely shy—partly because of language problems but also because they were not used to taking the initiative with professionals—and frequently were unable to make certain necessary generalizations from, for example, services for people with certain select disabilities to the possibility of the existence of similar services targeted to their child's disability. However, the introductory period did serve to help put parents at ease, to familiarize them with the type of interaction required in working effectively with institutions and organizations, and to introduce them to one another in an informal way. This part of the session, which should be retained, also helped set the stage for subsequent activities and established a tone of respect and friendliness.

Following the social time, project staff convened the group and a few minutes was spent welcoming them and describing the day's events. After this, the invited speakers (most of whom had staffed the resource tables) made their presentations to the large assembled group. The typical session involved three to four speakers on

subjects related to the session's theme; in those instances where the speaker was not fluent in English and Spanish, immediate translations were made by staff. This very time-consuming but essential activity had a significant impact on the agenda and was one of the factors that resulted in the finding that sessions tended to be over- or too-tightly scheduled. This was modified in the second cycle and the slightly reduced pace translated into greater impact.

After the whole-group presentations, parents divided into small groups which stayed intact for the entire cycle. It was here that the co-trainers took over the leadership. The small groups met for approximately one hour and 15 minutes of each session, half or more of the total time. During this time, parents were given an activity to work on—one that was also appropriate for them to undertake with their child at home. Typically, the co-trainers (who worked together as a team) would present the task, allow parents a few minutes to work on or think about the activity by themselves, and then proceed to have them talk about it. Generally, every person in the group would, in turn, respond; the co-trainers would react and would encourage other members of the group to do so.

At the end of the allotted time, the co-trainers would summarize and remind parents to work on the exercise with their child before the next meeting. This assignment was given in the form of "homework" and parents generally indicated their willingness to try it. Most parents did make an attempt, and were encouraged to try it again if it was unsuccessful, reporting on their progress the next time the small groups were formed. As often as not, however, they were not successful the first time: despite the fact that they made valient tries, their children tended not to want to complete the task with them. The young people, we were told, saw the activity as another "school assignment" and reacted impatiently. The children were reported to lack the patience and interest the activity required. Nonetheless, most parents found the attempt to work with their child in a directed way to be worthwhile and, as a result, learned to appreciate their child's strengths and weaknesses in new ways.

The final 15-20 minutes of the workshop session was devoted to a wrap-up. The large group was convened again, and project staff tied the session together, summarized the day's activities, led participants to conclusions, and helped them understand the goals and objectives. A question-and-answer period followed. Finally, the parents were asked to comment about the session: invariably, they remarked about the extent of caring (about handicapped children and their parents--i. e., themselves) they experienced. Time after time, parents expressed their gratitude and pleasure about the program and the people with whom they came into contact. They

also listed very specific things they had gained—usually information from a particular guest presenter or from other parents.

In some respects, the highlight of the program, in parents' views, was their exposure to young disabled people—recent high school graduates—who were working and/or in some post-high school education-training program. Parents readily identified with these youngsters and—more so than any other aspect of the program—this gave them a very special hope for their own children.

OUTCOMES

The co-trainers were integral to the effective implementation of the Parents-as-Career Educators project. Through their direct contacts with parents (before, during, and after the project), they had primary responsibility for translating objectives into actual practice. Much of the project's positive outcomes is attributable to their concern, interest, and hard work.

The Co-Trainer Role

The project called upon the co-trainers, especially the school representatives, to function in a variety of roles: as parent recruiter, small-group discussion leader, career education specialist, and facilitator of followup planning for individual parents and for the organization they represented. Their backgrounds had not prepared them for this diversity and the training they were offered focused on leading small groups and providing parents with career education information and guiding them through techniques that would be effective in clarifying the future vocational plans of their disabled child.

The co-trainers from the high schools had had extensive experience in the secondary schools. At the time of the project, all were special education coordinators or teachers who typically had been in these positions for approximately 2½ to 3 years, although there was a range of from half a year to 20 years (as a health conservation teacher.) As preparation for their special education duties, the co-trainers had had classroom experience with handicapped students, and had worked as resource teachers or with younger school-aged pupils; two of the co-trainers (who responded to the preprogram questionnaire) had had experience with severely handicapped young people. As a group, and with the exception of Hispanic co-trainers from select community-based referral agencies, the co-trainers were less familiar with the needs of Hispanic learners: for the most part, their experience was limited to that obtained at the high school at which they were at currently. Furthermore, they tended to have had little

prior experience with career education or with parents on other than a one-to-one basis.

Despite these gaps, however, the co-trainers expressed fairly high levels of confidence in their own ability to carry out the program. To begin with, the large majority (70%) were very comfortable with the concept of parents' involvement in the career preparation of disabled students. They not only thought it was a "worthwhile" idea, and a "logical" ancillary to what parents do naturally, but they acknowledged that "we [the educational system] need all the help we can get." They tended to be equally comfortable with their own skills—most frequently with being able to work with parents on a one-to-one basis (90% rated themselves as "very comfortable" with this, generally because they had been "doing this for years" and "really like the kind of relationship that develops"); and with adapting their experiences to a special education population (80% rated themselves "very comfortable"—that is, personally adaptable in this regard).

Somewhat fewer co-trainers (about 60% of the respondents) felt very skilled in working with small groups of parents or with large groups. Those that were more confident tended to base their self-ratings on good prior experiences with parents; however, those trainers who were less certain recognized that conducting groups—large or small—differs in significant ways from either working with individuals or teaching classes. Several persons described their lack of group experience and expressed the hope that the program would prepare them for these duties.

Most people—from 60 to 70 percent—indicated they were only "somewhat comfortable with the content knowledge of career education," with being able to adapt their experiences to an Hispanic population, or with how skilled they would be working with a doubly disadvantaged group, Hispanic and disabled. Their comments (in amplification of the ratings) made it clear that they expected that the project staff would help them apply the concepts they knew into skills that would be effective with parents and children. As one co-trainer said, "The pros will help me—I have some knowledge of career education, but don't know how to apply it; I need to be trained."

Training the co-trainers. As noted, the training of the co-trainers was accomplished in weekly planning sessions that preceded their [i.e., the co-trainers] conduct of the sessions for parent participants. At these planning meetings, project staff presented the sessions's agenda and led the co-trainers through the small-group activities designed for parents.

Early evaluative feedback brought about a modification in the planning meetings'

emphasis. Initially, goals and objectives were stressed and the activities were described. After observing the co-trainers at the first workshop, it was decided to spend more time on the activities themselves: in subsequent meetings, the co-trainers worked on the activity with project staff taking roles as leaders. In other words, a model small-group session was conducted thereby providing the co-trainers with a literal picture of the actual task.

This change brought about some related change in co-trainers' behavior. In the parent workshops they became more likely to use the materials in the proscribed manner and more likely to produce the desired outcomes. Part of the co-trainers' difficulty with the exercises pertained to their unfamiliarity with career education concepts, while part was related to this inexperience as small-group leaders.

The career education exercises in particular called for counseling skills—the activities having to do with selecting occupations on the basis of known skills, preferences, and interests. Contributing to the difficulty of the co-trainers' task was the fact that the groups of parents were not highly verbal and were themselves not used to describing their likes or dislikes. Also, the parents were very unfamiliar with and lacked knowledge about career options and had relatively little background in talking about occupations in terms of requirements or on-the-job duties. As a result, it was frequently very difficult to elicit information from them and to guide them through the process. Furthermore, from their comments it was often unclear whether they had a realistic grasp of their own child's abilities and how the disability might affect the child's vocational plans; they also had very little knowledge of the extent of a skill any particular career called for.

As an illustration, one parent said that her child was an excellent artist and wanted to be an architect. She felt that the only important prerequisite for this career was the ability to draw—and her son drew excellent pictures of cartoon characters. In this and similar situations, the co-trainer faced a very hard task: to provide important information about the career, to help the parent evaluate her child's ability, and to encourage career exploration and growth in a realistic way while at the same time not raising what might be false hopes.

What also was a problem for co-trainers was handling small-group dynamics. This was compounded again by the nature of the parent population: shy and reserved in relation to more advantaged groups, relatively non-verbal, and extremely polite and deferential. It was very hard to get them to interact with one another—most interaction was between the co-trainer and one parent, then between the co-trainer and the next parent, and so on around the circle. However, as in all small groups,

there were people who monopolized the time and others who rarely participated. The planning meetings were too short to permit project staff to work on these techniques as thoroughly as was desirable.

Nonetheless, co-trainers had few criticisms of or suggestions for improving these planning meetings. One person asked that the planning session for a workshop session be scheduled with more intervening time. No one called for more or longer sessions directly, although the evaluators and project staff agree that it would be desirable to have additional time for planning [i.e., for training], particularly devoted to small-group leadership techniques.

The co-trainers' comments about what they learned about themselves in terms of leading small groups suggests that they would concur with the recommendation for increasing the length of training time. One co-trainer said that she learned she "can't do group dynamics," explaining "it's too unlike teaching." Others indicated not being "able to deal with monopolizers" or not being "able to keep the group on track." Most co-trainers, however, were pleased with their own performance and described the small-group work as "enjoyable;" they were proud of how they learned to "draw out" the quiet parents, how they "kept them on the topic," and how they "kept to the time schedule." There was a general feeling of increased confidence in small-group situations together with an appreciation that this kind of leadership is a complex, but attainable skill.

Co-trainers also brought up the complexity of organizational-administrative details they were expected to supervise: parent recruitment, assuring regular attendance, and responsibility for the paperwork and forms to be maintained in order that parents receive the stipends for carfare to the session and for babysitter fees, if needed, were most frequently mentioned. Indeed, co-trainers—principally those from the high schools—did have these responsibilities at which they spent a great deal of time. It was not uncommon, for example, for co-trainers to call all parents in their group before each session to remind them of the time and place and to offer help and advice with their assignments.

Because of these varied functions and the time they take, future projects might consider the use of paired co-trainers from the same high school. This has many advantages, not the least of which is that certain co-trainer responsibilities could be more equally shared. Another probable advantage is that it would maximize the impact of the program on the educational institution by having back-up support at the site. There is a possible loss, however—notably, the input of co-trainers from outside organizations. Since the project does use many outside people in the roles of resources

and guest presenters, the overall net loss appears to be minimal and the anticipated gains are presumed to more than compensate.

Co-trainers' impact on parents. It is not easy to separate the effects of co-trainers per se from the general effects on parents resulting from the small-group experience; most of the parent/co-trainer interaction occurred in these groups. However, parents were very specific about the help they received from the co-trainers and the co-trainers themselves acknowledged their contribution to the outcomes for parents.

Most of the comments were about feelings of trust, caring, and respect. As noted, the co-trainers found the interaction with parents to be enjoyable, but what might be more important is their changed perceptions. As a result of the project, co-trainers developed "a new empathy for parents of special education youngsters" and "positive impressions of 'their concern for their child's vocational futures.'"

Parents, on the other hand, through their contacts with co-trainers came to view the school system with better understanding. They said things like, "I feel I have a friend at the school," "I would know who to ask about problems," and "I think my child has a good teacher to learn a lot." They began to make more appointments with school personnel and to come to the school more. Parents clearly knew "there is a person in the school who they can trust." For parents, the co-trainers made the system approachable.

In addition to this crucially significant outcome, parent/co-trainer interactions (as well as parent interactions with one another, with project staff, resource people, and guests—which will be described below) gave parents a sense that the education of their child was of personal concern to others. It also provided them with a model for subsequent dealings with representatives of all types of agencies and organizations; their degree of comfort and ease is nowhere more dramatically evident than in their willingness to join Parent Associations and to enroll in the Leadership Training Program for Bilingual Parents (conducted by Cornell University and made available to Parents-As-Career Educators participants.)

School-wide impact

The Parents-As-Career Educators project had a positive and extensive impact on the co-trainers and on the institutions and organizations they represent. Other than improving their skills (such as those required for leading small groups) and modifying their perceptions of the disabled and of the parent populations (such as making them

more empathetic and more knowledgeable), participation in the project resulted in changes in what co-trainers were doing on a daily basis and on their future plans.

Before the project, co-trainers reported minimal personal or organizational involvement in occupational programs for handicapped youngsters or in programs for their parents or generally for Hispanic parents. Although fairly large numbers of disabled children were reported served by the high schools, it was usually in terms of regular classes or course offerings. There were exceptions; in one or two instances, career counseling was offered in addition to occupational education classes.

As a result of the program, the co-trainers were motivated to engage in more targeted activities for students and parents and in several instances had instituted some activities by the end of the school term. One co-trainer, for example, had used some of the project-developed exercises in class, while another person had tried them with individual students. A third co-trainer had shown these exercises to other teachers, recommending their use. Some expressed intentions to design a career education course for disabled students and one co-trainer was considering a work-study program for them.

Co-trainers had already called on the contacts they made with community-based and bilingual agencies. Relationships with these organizations, with the possible exception of OVR, were lacking before the project—at least as reported by the co-trainers. After the project, there were several indications that efforts were being made to extend these contacts: Project ROPO representatives, as well as people from Job Path, Puerto Rican Forum, Lincoln Mental Center, the State Employment Center, Bronx VA Hospital, and United Parents Association (all project resources) had already visited the schools at the co-trainers' requests. And the co-trainers described their plans for the active involvement of more organizations in the vocational preparation and placement of disabled youngsters.

As reported by the co-trainers, most new trends resulting from the project were planned for parents and had the support of the school administration. For the Fall 1982, co-trainers intended to try another series of parent workshops on their own, including a series of monthly meetings; expand the content of parent workshops; facilitate the organization of a Parent Association subgroup for parents of special education students; and institute a followup, support program for the graduates of the 1981-82 workshops. Principals were reported to be particularly interested in holding more parent workshops, extending them to the general school population, and in urging the formation of special interest groups within the local parent association and UPA.

Despite these indications, on the end-of-program survey many co-trainers

cautioned that it was too early for the full impact of the program to be known. While they could describe some of the changes they expected to institute, the picture was incomplete because parent activity had not yet had time to develop. They already saw dramatic changes in parents who participated and were certain that these would translate into as yet indeterminant activity. Parents' relationships with the high school already showed signs of improvement: more parents were making appointments with teachers, and more frequently, and more were asking that their children be retested and reevaluated. In addition, there were some indications that parents were attempting to organize themselves—in one school, the participants had gotten together at Open House night; in another school they had expressed interest in keeping the group together even after their children had left the high school. At one site, parent participants had formed a committee to interview the special education supervisor. With time and with the encouragement of school personnel, co-trainers expected far-reaching changes that would have an impact on the school's relation with special education parents, with parents in general, and particularly on the vocational preparation of handicapped students.

Outcomes for Parents

Co-trainers and parents themselves reported that the project had a great and varied impact on the parent participants. These were described on the postprogram survey the trainers completed, the pre- postprogram changes in parents' attitudes and knowledge as assessed by questionnaire, and the spontaneous comments of parents during the workshop program. In this section we will examine these data, starting with the questionnaire results.

The first question asked parents to indicate whether each of eight statements pertaining to knowledge of services for or about the handicapped was true or false. The proportion of parents (both cycles combined) responding to each alternative is presented in Table 1 on the following page; this and the following comparisons used scores only of people who responded to both administrations—a total of 47 parents.

As can be seen in Table 1, at the end of the program there was an increase in the percentage of parents indicating the correct choice—and a decrease in those who could not express a choice—to all items with the exception of the one pertaining to the IEP: "once every year, the school must evaluate my child's special needs." The results suggest an increased number of parents learned more about the services the law gives to disabled people and particularly about the services and resources that are available to them. Almost all, 88 percent, felt they were better able to help their child decide on a career and knew more about kinds of jobs that are right for their child.

TABLE 1

PRE- POSTPROGRAM COMPARISON OF PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SERVICES
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE, BOTH PROGRAM CYCLES COMBINED
(Figures in Percentages)

Items	Preprogram			Postprogram		
	False	True	DK	False	True	DK
The law says the HS must give children with disabilities special activities	10	69	21	13	81	6
Once every year, the school must evaluate my child's special needs	11	70	19	24	63	13
There are organizations that offer special job training for children with disabilities	3	79	18	0	88	12
If I'm not happy with my child's special school program, there are definite things I can do	0	86	14	0	94	6
People with disabilities have a harder time choosing a career than people without any	14	82	4	27	73	0
Some jobs that used to be closed to people with special needs are no longer closed to them	3	76	21	6	75	19
I can name 2 organizations that help handicapped people	4	35	61	0	81	19
An employer has the right to ask for references	0	93	7	0	100	0
I am better able to help my child decide on a career because of this program	NOT APPLICABLE			0	88	12
Because of this program, I know more about the kinds of jobs that are right for my handicapped child	NOT APPLICABLE			0	88	12

When asked directly about the new things they learned about their child as a result of the program, their responses were interesting and showed marked diversity. One parent said she learned that "special education gives them a good chance for learning. By graduation they will have received help in different skills from different training programs." Another mother reported that she learned how to "watch [observe] his ways, to question him and to help him learn from his day in school." One father

now "understands his daughter better." For another, the most significant thing she learned was "to think like him"—to put herself in his shoes. One was shocked to learn that her child would not get a high school diploma.

Several parents talked about the job (preparation) opportunities they learned about and the many organizations that were concerned with the vocational needs of handicapped people. The help and friendship the school offers was also mentioned frequently. Parents generally, however, did not learn about specific career options for their child; this was because of the children's wide range of disabilities and because there was too little time in the sessions to devote to counseling individuals. For many parents, this was the most disappointing program outcome, only partially offset by the hope they were given for the future.

Parent attitudes toward career development were assessed by means of 10 items included on both the pre- and postprogram questionnaire. The mean score for each item on each administration is summarized in Table 2 on the following page. A four-point scale was used, where the 1.0 = disagree strongly to 4.0 = agree strongly; the higher the mean score the greater the agreement.

There were dramatic and statistically significant changes in attitude from the beginning of the program to the end. Most of these were toward more strong agreement. Thus, as a result of participation, parents more strongly agreed that "by the time a child is in high school, parents cannot do much to help him/her" (an acknowledgment, perhaps, of the importance of the early years or alternatively, of the importance of the school's role); "once a child decides on a career, she/he should stick to it" (this is not necessarily in the desired direction—most career educators favor flexibility in this regard); "it's best for a child to go on a job interview alone" (an indication again of the child's independence); and "children should decide on a career by themselves" (again unanimity—a great deal of emphasis was placed on likes and dislikes as determinants of career choice). There was a significant decrease in how strongly parents believed that a disabled child's career options were limited. The other items tended to show more strong agreement by the project's end, although not significantly so, and these were also in the hoped-for direction.

The final set of items, measured before and after the program, concerned parent behaviors. Parents were asked how often they did each of eight items on a list, or whether they plan to do it. The items, and the percentage of respondents who did each, "often," "sometimes," "not often," and "plan to" are summarized in Table 3 on page 16. The results are interesting, showing an increase in the proportion doing something "often" in only three instances: "making suggestions about what my child

TABLE 2

PRE- AND POSTPROGRAM COMPARISONS OF PARENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR DISABLED CHILD, BOTH CYCLES COMBINED

ITEM	Preprogram Mean ^a	Postprogram Mean
By the time a child is in high school, parents cannot do much to help him or her	1.81	2.20**
It is the school's responsibility to help my child plan a career	2.96	2.94
Because of her or his disability, my child needs special help from the school	3.59	3.81
Once a child decides on a career she or he should stick to it	2.52	3.00*
It's best for a child to go on a job interview alone	3.23	4.00*
Friends and family are the best source for finding a job	2.89	3.13
It's hard to get your own child to talk about how she or he is doing in school	2.58	2.73
What a person likes should be considered in the career she or he chooses	3.79	4.00**
Because of my child's special problems, there are only a few careers open to her or him	2.81	2.19*
Children should decide on a career by themselves	2.50	3.31*
^a Scale: 1.0 = strongly disagree; 2.0 = disagree a little; 3.0 = agree a little; 4.0 = agree strongly.		
*difference is significant at the .01 level of confidence; **pre- post-program difference is significant at the .05 level of confidence.		

should do after high school"; trying "to learn about what special rights my child has because of her/his disability"; and "showing my child books and magazines about careers." On these items, approximately two times as many parents indicated they did it "often" at the end of the program than before.

The same dramatic shift did not occur on the other items, although there was a change to more often on several. On some items there was a great increase in the percentage of parents who did it sometimes—"go to community organizations..." or "talk to people about the right kind of job for my child"—while on others, there

TABLE 3

PRE- AND POSTPROGRAM COMPARISONS OF THE FREQUENCY
OF SELECT PARENT BEHAVIORS
(Figures in Percentages)

Preprogram ITEM: Postprogram		Often	Some- times	Not Often	Plan to
Work with school people on my child's IEP	Pre	16	36	8	4
	Post	13	13	20	53
Go to the school's meetings for parents	Pre	36	36	5	23
	Post	25	44	13	19
Make suggestions about what my child should do after HS	Pre	22	26	4	48
	Post	38	31	13	19
Go to community organizations to get help for my child	Pre	23	12	19	46
	Post	13	31	19	38
Try to learn about what special rights my child has because of his/her disability	Pre	41	17	7	34
	Post	80	13	0	7
Show my child books and magazines about careers	Pre	22	37	15	26
	Post	47	33	13	7
Try to get my child to tell me about what she/he likes or is good at	Pre	64	21	7	7
	Post	63	31	0	6
Talk to people about the right kind of job for my child	Pre	29	18	18	36
	Post	25	50	13	13

appeared to be a more realistic assessment of their own actions. As an illustration, whereas before the program more than half the respondents said they worked "often" or "sometimes" on the IEP, at the end of the program, half of the parents reported that they planned to do so. Generally, however, these data show that as a result of participating in the Parent-as-Career Educators project, parents more frequently engaged in behaviors that pertained to the project's objectives and, in addition, more than 90 percent did all suggested activities with their child. Four out of 10 had already contacted one of the organizations the program introduced.

Equally important are the co-trainers and staff reports about the benefits of the program for parents. Because of the kind of involvement they had with parents, they tended to report affective outcomes for the most part and these concerned the changes they witnessed. Parents were reported to have better relations with the schools—as we have noted, more came to the schools and they came more often—and

with their own children. They began to view their disabled youngsters as more independent people, which shows up in their questionnaire responses, and gained some skill and new techniques for interacting with them, which the parents themselves reported. Their children, the students, were proud of their parents' participation in the program and told the co-trainers that their parents were taking a greater interest in their work. According to the co-trainers, a noticeable improvement in parent-child relationships was one of the outstanding program outcomes which had positive spill-over on the child's behavior in school. Because they were aware of their parents' involvement, and because they knew their parents and teachers were in contact with one another, the students were described as more open and communicative, somewhat less hostile, and more cooperative.

Parents' self-image and confidence was also much improved and there were other, important parent-centered gains: many parents were motivated to consider changing their own lives in addition to becoming more active in the school life of their children—

- one participant is now considering a career in nursing;
- several parents are expressing interest in changing occupations;
- at least three parents enrolled in English-as-Second Language programs;
- one father returned to high school;
- one mother is investigating vocational training programs; and
- more than 30 percent of the participants—about one out of every three—enrolled in the Cornell University Leader Training program.

These results are serendipitous and illustrate participants' need for and responsiveness to education-training programs, both for their children and for themselves. Because all of them have several children of their own, the effects of the Parents-as-Career Educators project will have multiplier effects on the family and on the community.

GENERAL REACTIONS

Without exception, co-trainers rated the project as very worthwhile: it had personal value as well as value for the parents and to the participating organizations. One trainer described it as "vital" to the well being of handicapped families, especially those who also suffer the disadvantage of language, and as exemplifying an important concept for all parents of school-aged children.

The project's strengths, in the opinions of the co-trainers, were its flexibility, its

structure which allowed for maximum input, and the supportiveness and sincerity of the project staff. They were hard pressed to enumerate general weaknesses other than space (in the Bronx cycle) and the frustrations they experienced in recruiting sufficient numbers of parents; parents too bemoaned the fact that not more parents were involved and they expressed absolutely no reservations in recommending the program to others.

In the views of co-trainers (and of parents, see below), some strategies were more effective than others. Of particular merit was the small-group work followed by the availability of the resource people and presenters; of less success was the social time and the print materials.

Co-trainers thought the initial period devoted to refreshments was good in that it gave them needed time for administrative details but that little socialization among parents actually occurred. While the evaluators agree that little interaction among parents took place, other important things were happening: parents were experiencing courteous and concerned treatment and special arrangements for their comfort and ease. They reacted well to this and, in each cycle as time went on, began to relate to other parents although there were few instances of the hoped-for level of interaction among them: to the end of the program, shyness predominated.

The large group presentation with which each session formally began was described by co-trainers as "setting the tone," "bringing the group together psychologically," and "preparing participants for the work that was to follow." It was an important and effective strategy that, in addition to the benefits listed by co-trainers, enabled the participants to get to know the project staff and to experience at first-hand the qualities and personalities of these people which underlay the project's entire thrust and content. The guest presenters and resource people expanded parents' exposure and gave them an opportunity to interact with administrators, employers, and representatives of agencies that could be called upon to help their child.

In assessing the resource tables, observers again noted relatively little interaction among parents; as they became more confident, there was increased questioning of the resource people, but again this tended to be limited. The value of this component of the project lay not so much in the specific information that was provided to parents as in the impression that was made that "out there" exists a great many chances for assistance.

Co-trainers agreed that the small-groups were very useful. They gave parents an opportunity to express personal concerns and to get some individual feedback. While most of the interaction occurred between a parent and a co-trainer, one at a time,

friendships among parents formed as did some support groups. Two parents, for example, discovered they lived in the same apartment building and by the end of the cycle were already visiting one another at home. The small groups were also effective in giving the shy parent a chance to participate and in allowing all participants to relax and "let down their hair."

We observed, with time, increasing incidents where the members of the group described their own experiences, thus providing others with new ideas. One incident in particular stands out: a parent was explaining the difficulty he was encountering in getting his child to work with him on one of the take-home activities and described how he resolved it by carefully choosing a time. The other parents, who identified with the problem, began to talk about times where it was inappropriate to ask children to work with them (as, for example, when a favorite TV program was on) and to list better, more opportune times. For many people it was clearly the first time that they had thought about this and in subsequent sessions, several reported on successes. This, in our opinion, epitomizes the rationale for the use of small-groups.

Other techniques the trainers were asked to rate included the use of co-leaders, the translations into Spanish, and the print materials distributed for take-home use. (The print materials were variously described as "very informative," "have more" to "they needed to be explained to participants" and "too difficult.")

The translations into Spanish, either by the speaker or by the project staff, was one of the highlights of the project. Acknowledgedly, it was time consuming and slowed down the agenda; nonetheless, it was an inducement to the Spanish-speaking parents and served to show everyone that there is a commonality of experience despite individual differences. Having separate Spanish-speaking small groups for parents with limited English ability is, of course, a must, but continued effort should be made to have English-speaking and Spanish-speaking participants together for at least some of the activities.

In the following section of this report we will describe in detail the parents' ratings of each session, separately for the Bronx and the Manhattan cycle. The detailed assessments are included to provide the project staff with information about the outcomes of each session and how they might be modified in the future; and to enable the reader to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the program, as well as to appreciate the changes made from session to session and from the first to the second (Manhattan) cycle in line with suggested revisions.

Here, we will summarize some general trends across sessions and cycles. The

purpose is to present parents' general reactions and, to the extent that it can be done, contrast these with questionnaire results and with the opinions of co-trainers, staff, and evaluators.

Parents' Ratings of the Sessions, General Trends

At the conclusion of Sessions 2-6, parent participants were given a short session rating form (in Spanish or English as was the case with all materials, including evaluation instruments) on which they assessed the workshops' various components (e.g., small groups, resource people, etc.) and the usefulness, interest, and worth of the day's events.

The instructions asked parents to complete these ratings at home and to return the form at the next session. The return rate was impressive—averaging 45 percent of each session's attendance. However, the results should be regarded as suggestive: because of their presumed literacy level, the items were designed with only three response sets typically, thereby not permitting a great deal of differentiation. The high response rate itself, however, is evidence of parents' overall enthusiasm for and involvement with the program.

Table 4 on the following page presents parents' general reactions to the program on a session-by-session basis for each cycle. Following this, Table 5 summarizes their descriptions of the usefulness of each component; and Table 6 contains their ratings of how much they learned about various topics at each session. These same data, rearranged, form the basis for the final assessment of the program on an individual session basis.

Both rating form responses and the observed reactions of parents revealed an enthusiastic response to the program. This tended to be more true of the Manhattan group than of the Bronx group for three hypothesized reasons: first, the program was made tighter and better focused as a result of the first cycle's experience; second, the Manhattan trainers themselves seemed more dedicated to the project and more organized; and finally, the second cycle participants seemed to be slightly more advantaged than their Bronx counterparts: there was greater ethnic diversity, more men parents represented, and a greater proportion were employed at skilled occupations outside the home.

In their comments, parents would rarely point to any "worst" thing about a session and their repeated response to how the program could be improved was simply to "have more sessions," "include more parents," and "continue the program next year."

As can be seen in Table 4, they felt the program was "very worthwhile and interesting" and that each session was of an appropriate length. They also thought the speakers were, overall, quite good—"very." They tended to be less positive about the new ideas that were generated but were more likely to rate this higher in the later sessions. In programs of this type it is not unusual for participants to be skeptical about what they are learning while they are in the process; with time and almost invariably in retrospect, there comes a greater appreciation of the direct and incidental knowledge and information they gained. This is not to imply that little was learned in the sessions; actually, the majority of parents indicated they "learned a lot" (see Table 6, page 24), especially in some areas as we will see below; however, relative to their feelings of how useful, worthwhile, and interesting the program was, how many new ideas were sparked tended to be rated less highly.

TABLE 4
PARENTS' GENERAL REACTIONS TO THE WORTH OF THE PROJECT ON
A SESSION-BY-SESSION BASIS, BY CYCLE

ITEMS	SESSIONS									
	2		3		4		5		6	
	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	1 & 2	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2		
Today's session was:										
How worthwhile? ^a	2.92	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.92	3.00	2.94	3.00	2.84	
How interesting? ^b	2.92	3.00	2.80	2.95	3.00	2.89	3.00	3.00	2.88	
Generated many ideas? ^c	1.08	1.17	1.75	2.52	2.36	2.29	2.48	2.57	2.60	
Appropriate in length ^d	2.85	2.87	3.00	2.90	2.92	3.00	2.92	2.93	2.88	
Today's speakers were:										
How good? ^e	2.77	2.87	2.80	2.95	2.91	2.89	2.93	2.86	2.84	
SCALES:										
^a 1 = not very; 2 = a little; 3 = very worthwhile										
^b 1 = not very; 2 = a little; 3 = very interesting										
^c 1 = not very many; 2 = a few; 3 = a lot										
^d 1 = too long; 2 = too short; 3 = just right										
^e 1 = not very; 2 = just O.K.; 3 = very good										

Most clearly evident was how valuable the program was in demonstrating that someone cared about them and their children. For most, perhaps for all, this was the first time that a concerted effort had been made to show them—by bringing to them—what opportunities were available for the handicapped, what their rights were, how they could better relate to their children, and how to help their children achieve their full vocational potential. This was accomplished through the interactions with other parents, co-trainers, resource people, and project staff: the clear message that each child could be prepared for productive work only served to motivate the parents to seek out the assistance and resources and to work with their children to develop their interests and marketable skills.

As can be seen in Table 5, the opportunity to interact with one another and with

TABLE 5
PARENTS' RATINGS OF THE PROGRAM'S COMPONENTS ON A
SESSION-BY-SESSION BASIS, BY CYCLE^a

ITEMS	SESSIONS								
	2		3		4		5		6
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	1 & 2
Talking to people from the hs and colleges	2.92	2.90	2.83	2.95	3.00	2.94	2.87	3.00	2.72
Talking to people from other organizations	2.85	2.95	2.83	2.85	2.91	2.94	2.90	2.93	2.68
Talking with other parents	2.92	2.95	3.00	2.85	2.83	2.83	2.89	3.00	2.68
Reading materials	2.92	2.77	2.60	2.85	2.67	2.82	2.79	2.93	2.74
Meeting in large group	2.67	2.76	2.83	2.80	2.75	2.80	2.72	2.69	2.60
Meeting in small group	2.92	2.82	2.83	2.83	3.00	2.82	3.00	3.00	2.75
Asking questions about my child	3.00	2.91	3.00	2.80	2.83	2.94	2.91	2.93	2.79
^a SCALE, HOW USEFUL was the meeting? 1 = not very; 2 = a little; 3 = very useful.									

the other people was, without doubt, one of the strongest positive benefits of the project. Parents rated as "most useful" talking with the co-trainers (i.e., people from the schools and from the "other organizations"), and with one another, and particularly in asking questions about their children. The guest speakers (who generally presented to the large assembled group) were also very well received; and for some sessions, parents reported that listening to what the speakers had to say was among the "best" parts of the program.

Observers noted that parents sometimes exhibited frustration or appeared bewildered when general topics were discussed or when the speaker was abstract or overly optimistic. Participants were clearly interested in a realistic appraisal of the future their children faced—what they (and other similar youngsters) could accomplish, what training was available to them, and how they, the parents, should go about identifying and tapping various school and community resources.

In part, this accounts for the popularity of the small-group activity. Here, parents could ask questions and describe situations of a more personal nature; shy parents could participate; and the specific tasks they worked on had great applicability to their children. Despite this, parents frequently reported that they learned only somewhat more than "a little" in terms of ideas they could try out at home—one of the objectives of the small-group exercises. Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that, as parents reported, getting their child to sit down with them and work on the activity was almost invariably troublesome.

Table 6 illustrates that on a topic-by-topic basis, parents tended to say that they learned relatively little. These ratings tend to be at variance with the pre- to post-program comparisons which were discussed earlier. There, there were changes on most items from the beginning to the end of the program, lending support to our contention that it takes time for new learnings and new information to be assimilated. However, the preponderance of evidence and its quality strongly suggests that the Parents-as-Career Educators project was least successful in this area. While it unquestionably demonstrated the wealth of resources parents could marshal in behalf of themselves and their children, while it dramatically showed that help was available to them, while it clearly opened communication and established crucial networks, and while it effectively motivated and provided them with rudimentary tools to work with their children, it did not offer them as much of the specific help and advice they need.

As we have reiterated, these groups of parent participants were economically disadvantaged—with all that entails and implies—and additionally faced with the enormous challenge presented by a disabled child of high school-age—only a year or

TABLE 6

PARENTS' RATINGS ABOUT HOW MUCH THEY LEARNED IN SELECT
AREAS ON A SESSION-BY-SESSION BASIS, BY CYCLE^a

	SESSIONS								
	2		3		4		5		6
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	1 & 2
What the schools should do for students with a disability	2.42	2.67	2.40	2.75	2.55	2.60	2.62	2.69	2.57
What other organizations do for students with a disability	2.38	2.75	2.60	2.66	2.36	2.60	2.67	2.77	2.81
Where I can get help with my child's problem	2.38	2.55	2.40	2.76	2.73	2.69	2.80	2.85	2.65
Things I can do at home to help my child choose a career	2.54	2.70	2.20	2.81	2.67	2.71	2.68	2.77	2.57
How to work with other parents	2.46	2.71	2.20	2.60	2.18	2.53	2.54	2.67	2.68
How to work with the school to help my child	2.36	2.81	2.20	2.74	2.40	2.63	2.65	2.77	2.68
How to work with other organizations to help my child	2.31	2.40	2.20	2.47	2.45	2.50	2.68	2.77	2.60
The many kinds of jobs that are available	NA	NA	2.50	2.55	2.50	2.56	2.60	2.64	2.64
What people have to do to have the career they want	NA	NA	2.60	2.38	2.56	2.67	2.76	2.77	2.45
The schooling required for different careers	2.31	2.38	2.60	2.38	2.89	2.59	2.57	2.46	2.52
Things about careers to tell my child	2.33	2.76	2.60	2.74	2.50	2.59	2.60	2.62	2.67
What business looks for in workers	NA	NA	2.40	2.47	2.67	2.31	2.67	2.69	2.70
How to help my child learn about his/her interests and abilities	2.58	2.62	2.40	2.75	2.45	2.71	2.52	2.85	2.77

^aSCALE: 1 = did not learn much; 2 = learned a little; 3 = learned a lot.

less away from completion of high school and entry into the work force. Their childrens' disabilities were wide-ranging and the attendant problems very diverse. Moreover, for various and important reasons, the program relied heavily on leaders and guests from established institutions (notably, the school system) who received little training and who came with virtually no experience in working with parents in small groups. Thus, it is not surprising that parents' great appetite for individual help— for information, precise facts and exercises tailored to their own child—were not as well met in this 6-session project as were most of their other needs: for support, friendship, hope, and contacts.

The program designers envisioned the Parents-as-Career Educators project as an important first, introductory step in the educative process. The schools and the other organizations, both community, bilingual advocacy groups and agencies for the handicapped, are the appropriate locus for the individual assistance these parents require. By the project's end, parents were well-equipped to deal with these organizations; in turn, the schools and the other organizations had become more responsive. There were already indications that the parents and the agencies were taking the necessary next steps together.

Individual Session Ratings

In this concluding section, we will examine parents' reactions to each Session, 2-6, including a description of what took place. Because there was a difference between the two cycles, each will be presented separately for Sessions 2, 3, and 4; Sessions 5 and 6 are combined: Session 5 because the results were so similar and Session 6 because this final meeting included participants from both the Bronx and Manhattan cycles.

What follows is based on the data already presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6 which looked at the same items across sessions; here we examine the different items within each session.

Session 2, Bronx—"The School and Children with Special Needs: Providing Services." Half of the 26 parents who attended this session completed a rating form. All except one reported the meeting to be "very" worthwhile and interesting and all said that they would recommend it to a friend. In terms of the length of the session, the large majority found it "just about right."

The speakers for Session 2 were from CBEOC, Job Path, Altro Workshop, and FECS. These panelists discussed parents' involvement in their children's progress in

school, the educational services provided by the school, and the legal rights of handicapped children. More than three-quarters of the parent respondents reported that these speakers were "very good." Slightly fewer, but still a majority, rated talking to these people and "meeting in the large group" very useful than the number who found very useful "talking to people from the high schools and colleges," "talking with other parents about their experiences," "talking in small groups," and "the things we got to read." All parents liked "asking questions about our child." These responses suggest that the value derived from this session may be attributed, in large part, to interactions with other parents and to discussions of a more personal nature about their own individual child. (These small group discussions centered around a career maturity inventory which is described below.)

The above speculation is supported by the slightly less positive responses to how much parents learned about the issues put forward. On virtually every question, the typical response was that parents learned "a little" about a specific item. Relatively least was learned about what other organizations could do for their child. For such items as "how to work with other organizations to help my child" and "what other organizations do for students with a disability," several parents indicated they "did not learn much." When asked the number of ideas they got to try out at home, most responded "not very many." While this might call into question the effectiveness of the particular outside speakers, the value of the session as a whole was underscored by the majority of parents who reported learning "a lot" about how they could help their child and how to work with other parents; these are the types of things parents indicated they found "most useful." In truth, however, the presenters frequently spoke in generalities, as if the audience had a comprehensive and detailed grasp of the subject. While it should be borne in mind that each speaker had only a few minutes, one of the stated aims of the session—to demonstrate skills the parents can use to help their children identify interests, abilities, and aptitudes related to career development—was more successfully achieved than was the goal of providing parents with information about handicapped children's legal and educational rights and services.

When asked what they liked best about the program, most parents "liked everything." Some singled out learning about organizations, talking with the teachers (i.e., co-trainers), and learning about their child's rights in the IEP evaluation. All parents who responded to the question about what was worst about the day's session, wrote "nothing," except for one parent who responded that the speakers were not interesting to her. Respondents felt that the program could be improved if more

parents attended and if more such programs were run in other locations.

Session 2, Manhattan-"Resources in the Community for Children with Special Needs. The following ratings are based on the reports of 24 of the 37 parents (64%) who attended.

All respondents rated the meeting "very" worthwhile and interesting, and would have no qualms about recommending it to a friend. Most thought that its length was "just about right," although some commented that they would have liked even more time for more in-depth discussion.

The speakers, from AHRC, UPA, FECS, and Job Path, were rated "very good" by a large majority of parents. They presented information about the training services their organizations offered and explained how parents should best use the agencies. The effectiveness of this group of speakers was revealed by the large number of parents who "learned a lot" about "what other organizations can do for students with a disability." And, when asked what they thought was best about the session, many parents reported it was listening to the speakers and meeting in the large group. The representative from Job Path was frequently singled out as helpful, useful, and encouraging. Parents appeared particularly responsive to the idea that Job Path helps children not only in getting jobs but also with counseling and therapy. Their ratings of the materials the presenters distributed was also very positive.

In the small groups, a career maturity inventory was introduced and parents practiced it themselves and were instructed on using it with their children. Most parents rated this activity as "very useful," and were particularly enthusiastic about talking with other parents about their experiences and asking questions about their children. Virtually all parents felt that talking to people from the high schools and colleges (co-trainers and project staff predominantly) was very useful and, following from this, more of the parents reported that they "learned a lot" about "how to work with schools to help their children" than reported learning "a lot" about any other item included on the rating form.

The area that parents reported learning the least about, relatively, was "what kind of schooling there is for different careers"; more than half of the respondents learned only "a little" about this. Slightly more than half learned "a lot" about "things to tell my child about careers" and "how to help my child learn about his or her interests and abilities," one of the objectives of the career maturity inventory. However, the majority of parents reported "learning a lot" about careers that they could discuss with their children and about things they can do at home to help their

child choose a career. This sharply contradicts the responses of the large majority of parents who reported to the general question that they did not get very many ideas at the session to try out at home.

When asked how they felt the program could be made better, some parents indicated that they felt the program to be so helpful that they wished more parents could attend. Several people noted that there are other parents who want to attend, such as working parents, but who have schedules that interfere with the program's afternoon meeting time; 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. was suggested as an alternative schedule.

Session 3, Bronx-"Resources in the Community for Children with Special Needs: Providing Services." While attendance was high at 36, only 6 parents (17%) completed and returned the session evaluation form; the following generalizations about this session should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

The session was very worthwhile and just about the right length for everyone. While the majority also found it to be "very" interesting as well, and felt it would be worthwhile to a friend, most indicated that they got only "a few" ideas to try out at home.

Most parents felt that the speakers, representatives from community training and support organizations, were very good. A slightly less positive response was obtained when parents were asked how useful they found the large group activity in which the speakers were featured. In observing parents in the large group, many appeared frustrated with the procedures the educational system instituted, which came across as bureaucracy, red tape, and carelessness (e.g., parents reported receiving official letters without a signature, thereby effectively precluding the possibility of a response). The session made it quite clear that parents had many individual questions, only some of which could be answered. Another observation was that parents appeared not to understand the purposes of the speakers or the points they were raising. As an illustration, they thought that one organization was an adversary, not an advocacy group. When this reaction was brought to the attention of project staff, it resulted in a more careful introduction of guest speakers.

As we have seen before, respondents reported talking with other parents and asking questions about their child to be very useful to them; this was unanimous. The majority also found "talking in the small groups" to be very useful. Together these ratings indicate that parents gained the most from their interaction with other parents in the small groups, facilitated by the activity—a card sort exercise to explore jobs on

the basis of preferences and abilities. While there was a lot of interaction around the job sort, however, its purpose was not focused on; for the next cycle, project staff ensured that the co-trainers received more complete explanations which they then successfully communicated to the parent participants.

One of the expected outcomes of Session 3 was to enable parents to identify community resources that provide training and support services for handicapped students; another goal was to have parents assess their own and their children's interests and abilities and to relate these to careers. Slightly more than half the respondents reported that they did, in fact, learn "a lot" about what organizations do for disabled students; the majority reported learning "a little" about how to work with other parents and how to work with schools to help children; all reported that they had learned something about the kinds of jobs that there are available. With respect to the other objective, the majority of parents felt they learned "a little" about what they could do at home to help their child to choose a career and how to help their child learn about his or her interests and abilities. This suggests that the card sort exercise may not have been fully effective, an outcome that was observable during the session. On the other hand, in terms of job information—things about careers to tell their child, the kind of schooling there is for different careers, and what people have to do to have the career they want—participants for the most part learned "a lot."

When asked what they thought was the best thing about Session 3, parents said learning about the types of jobs which were right for their children. Again, no one was able to describe any worst thing about the meeting.

Session 3, Manhattan—"Providing Services to children with Special Needs: The Role of the School." There were 34 parents who attended this third session in Manhattan, with 21 (62%) assessing it. As was the case in the first cycle, this session's purposes were to provide parents with information about educational rights and services and about legal rights, and to demonstrate skills parents could use to help their children focus on interests and abilities related to career development. All parents rated the session as "very" worthwhile, and, all but one said it was "very" interesting as well. Unquestionably, they would recommend this session to friends.

The large group panel was comprised of representatives from ROPO and Hunter College's Bilingual Special Education program. They discussed parent involvement in school, the educational services schools' provide, and the legal rights of handicapped children. Ninety-five percent of the parents rated the speakers as "very good" and many commented that the panelists and the information they presented was the "best"

part of the session. Observers noted a very high level of attentiveness and responsiveness among the parents, especially to the Spanish-speaking guest. Partly because there was so much valuable information being presented, several parents suggested that it would be valuable to have each speaker's name and the location and phone number of their organization listed so that it would be easier to contact them.

As might be expected, the large group and small group activities were rated equally high, with approximately 80 percent of the respondents indicating that these activities were "very useful." The small-group activity, which consisted of the card sort exercise, had parents sort a set of 20 cards with job titles and pictures. The exercise was designed to encourage them to explore the jobs that were interesting to them, and the skills and abilities required to do the job. Observers noted that as soon as parents broke into the small groups they continued talking about what had been discussed in the large group and had to be urged to turn their attention to the new activity. This suggests that not only was there insufficient time for questions in the large assembly, but that some participants were still too inhibited to ask them.

One of the hoped-for outcomes of the session was to have parents identify the several services the school provides for handicapped children. Three-quarters of the respondents indicated "they learned a lot" about "what schools should do for students with disabilities," "where I can get help for my child's problems," and "how to work with the school to help my children." These responses indicate that this objective had been achieved for the majority of parents.

Another goal was to better enable parents assess their own interests and abilities and to help their children do a more realistic assessment. Almost all respondents felt they had "learned a lot" about things I can do at home to help my child choose a career," and "how to help my child learn about his or her interests and abilities." The usefulness of the card sort exercise as a means of achieving this, however, is called into question: respondents were fairly evenly split between having learned "a few" and "a lot" of ideas to try out at home. Yet, participants appeared to enjoy this exercise once they got started and for some, it was the "best" part of the session.

Session 4, Bronx-"School and Community Training Opportunities for Students with Special Needs." Less than half, 41 percent, of the 29 parents who attended this session completed a rating form. All respondents reported that the fourth session was "very interesting" and that they would recommend it to a friend; all but one respondent noted that the session was "very worthwhile" and the length of the session was "just about right."

The aim of the session was to demonstrate skills that parents can use to help their children identify values related to career development; and to have parents become aware of the different community resources (training, academic, and support services) available to their children. It appeared that the second objective met with more success than the first, according to the ratings of respondents. The parents were more receptive to discussions of what is available for their child, are they eligible, how do they tap the various community resources—than they are to the more subtle issues of career values and interests.

At this meeting, the large group activity consisted of a panel presentation: representatives from Altro Workshop, Job Path, Hostos Community College, OVR, and the New York City Board of Education-Special Education Division discussed the training and services they offer and how parents can make use of their resources. These speakers were rated by virtually all respondents as "very good." The "usefulness" of the information they provided was evidenced by the overwhelming majority of parents who reported that "talking to the people from other organizations" and "meeting in the large groups" was "very useful." Furthermore, most parents also found asking questions about their children to be very useful to them and we observed that all the questions (asked in the large group) dealt with their child's eligibility for the services described.

The small-group activity consisted of another card-sort exercise; parents were given a checklist of values and discussed each of them in terms of their implications for career choice. As homework, they were asked to do the activity with their children. In the observers' opinion, this exercise did not appear relevant to what parents were saying about their children. Again, they were more interested in what their children could do and what is available for them to do; the worth of the small-group activity (which was unanimously rated "very useful") appeared to lie not necessarily in the content of the card-sort itself, but in the opportunity it afforded participants to talk to each other about their experiences and ask questions about their children (83% of the respondents reported these opportunities to be "very useful"). This conclusion is supported by parents' written comments where they described the best thing about the session as the chance it gave them to talk with other parents about their children and to learn about the opportunities available to them. In terms of the number of ideas they got to try out at home, about half the respondents reported getting "a lot" while the other half reported getting "a few" or "not very many."

The informational objectives of the session were well met: a large majority of

parents reported learning "a lot" about where to get help for their child's problems and "what kind of schooling there is for different careers." A smaller number but still a majority also reported they had learned "a lot" about what schools should do for students with a disability, what other organizations do for such students, how to work with schools to help their child, what kinds of jobs are available, what people have to do to have the career they want, and what businesses look for in workers.

Underscoring the overall positive response to the session, parents could not single out one aspect of the program as the "worst." When asked how they thought the program could be made better, all who responded said "just have more workshops like the ones we are having."

Session 4, Manhattan—"School and Community Training Opportunities for Students with Special Needs." As we saw before, not only was there a greater number of attendees in the second cycle (N = 35), but a larger proportion—51 percent—completed the session rating form. Their responses again tended to be somewhat more positive than the Bronx cycle respondents, perhaps reflecting the general strengthening of the program in the second round of implementation.

Similar to the findings for the other sessions, parents found it interesting and worthwhile and were more positive about how useful various aspects of the meeting was than they were about how much they learned from it. The large group activity was received quite positively. The speakers (representatives from Hostos Community College, OVR, and the New York City Board of Education—Special Education Division) were rated "very good" by most of the respondents.

One might speculate that parents derived the most benefit from interacting with the speakers on questions about their individual child and relatively less benefit from information about the speakers' organizations. In other words, for these groups of parents, the sessions' major values were in the interactional opportunities; during the program they seemed relatively unimpressed by what they were learning, in contrast to their really strong appreciation of the attention they were receiving. This hypothesis is again supported by parents' ratings of what they learned: 40 percent reported that they "learned a little" about "what other organizations do for students with disabilities" and about half said they learned "a little" about "how to work with other organizations to help my child." The same response was obtained with respect to representatives from the high schools: practically all parents rated "talking to people from the high schools and colleges," as very useful, yet only half reported learning "a lot" about "what the schools should do for students with a disability." This finding and

its repetitive characteristic strongly suggests that the value for parents comes initially not so much from what they learned, as from the process of interacting with school and community organizations representatives.

The small-group activity involved a card-sort exercise in which parents explored abilities, interests, and values as they related to career choice: first their own in the workshop and then with their child at home. This activity appeared to be successful overall. The majority of parents rated "talking in small groups" to be "very useful"; "talking with other parents about our experiences" also got a high usefulness rating. However, the majority of respondents (70%) said they received only "a few" ideas that they could try out at home. They tended not to see these types of activities as having particular relevance to their child, perhaps realistically in light of their children's problems. They also continually reported how hard it was to get their child to sit down and do the exercises at home. When asked what they liked best about the day's session, many parents cited the small group—both the opportunity to listen to other parents talk about their experiences with their children and the discussion about helping their child choose different jobs (the card sort). Many parents again noted that the program could be improved only by the involvement of more parents.

Session 5—"Labor Market Conditions and Employer Needs: Implications for Hiring Students with Special Needs." Because the results of the two cycles are so similar, only those from Manhattan will be described. Twenty-two percent of the Bronx attendees and 40 percent of the Manhattan attendees responded to the rating form.

The focus of this session was on getting jobs: identifying skills and abilities that employers look for when hiring, and examining materials and techniques that students can use in their job search activities. Parents were exposed to local employers and job placement resources.

The large-group activity consisted of a panel presentation including the following employers and placement services: New York Telephone, New York City Board of Education Placement, New York Port Authority, I.C.D., and the New York City Transit Authority. These speakers were overwhelmingly rated as "very good."

In the large group, each presenter briefly introduced their company or organization, described where it is located, how many people were employed, the employment outlook, and services the company provided. Respondents tended to find these presentations somewhat less useful than the small groups (69% of parents rated the large group to be "very useful," while all respondents rated the small groups as "very useful") which met with these same representatives.

The more positive response of parents to the small group was probably due to the opportunity to interact directly with the employers and ask questions about their individual children. Virtually all parents rated this aspect of the small-group component as "very useful." Here, the panelists rotated among the groups, discussing factors which could improve the employability of handicapped students, with emphasis on the initial interview. Observers noted that in the small groups parents appeared shy at first, but with encouragement from the co-trainers, they became more relaxed and talkative. They continually tried to focus on their particular child—was there a job for him or her. Some seemed discouraged by businesses' use of standardized tests in the selection process.

The objectives of the session were to make parents aware of labor market conditions and hiring practices, resources that handicapped students can use in job hunting, and select employers and placement services particularly responsive to the needs of the handicapped. Questionnaire responses indicated how well these objectives were achieved. With respect to the first objective, 64% reported they "learned a lot" about "what businesses look for in their workers." In terms of the information they obtained to help their children in the job hunt, parents reported learning "a lot" about "things I can do at home to help my child choose a career" (77%), "what people have to do to have the career they want" (77%), and "how to help my child learn about his or her interests and abilities" (85%). The third objective, having parents identify relevant employers and placement services, appeared to meet with the most success: virtually all parents reported "learning a lot" about where to get help for their child.

Parents reported that the best aspect of the session was learning about the different fields and careers available to their children. Many wished their children were present to hear this information first hand.

Session 6—"Special Education Students in the World of Work." The sixth session was the "grand finale" of the Parents-as-Career Educators program in several senses. Both the participants from the Bronx and Manhattan cycles, as well as their children, were invited to attend; in all, about 75 parents and children attended. The relatively low response rate (34%) may be attributed to the fact that there was no opportunity for parents to return questionnaires at a subsequent session.

Eighty-four percent of the respondents rated the session as "very worthwhile" and all noted that they would recommend it to a friend. A large majority considered the meeting "very interesting" and noted the meeting's length was "just about right." These ratings in no way convey the session's fervor.

The meeting began with special refreshments served in the school cafeteria. It was extremely festive and parents talked enthusiastically with each other and project staff.

After approximately one-half hour, parents and their respective children broke up into small groups. The guests for this meeting were other handicapped youngsters—most of whom recently graduated from participating high schools and who now had jobs in the community. These young people rotated among the groups of parents, describing their experiences in getting and keeping jobs. Facilitated by the co-trainers, parents and guests talked about the difficulties of finding employment: how to cope with jobs, supervisors, and co-workers; and what the schools should and were doing to prepare handicapped students for the world of work.

In terms of the rating form's standard categories, the majority of parents found the small groups "very useful," as they did "talking to people from the high schools and colleges" and "asking questions about our child." Only 60 percent noted they got "a lot" of ideas to try out at home. Just slightly more than half the respondents reported they "learned a lot" about "what the schools should do for students with a disability," "things I can do at home to help my child choose a career," "what people have to do to have the career they want," "what kind of schooling there is for different careers," and "things about careers to tell my child." A larger majority reported learning "a lot" about "what other organizations do for students with a disability" (70%), "where I can get help for my child's problems" (80%), "how to work with schools to help my child" (73%), "the many kinds of jobs that are available" (68%), "what businesses look for in workers" (70%), and "how to help my child learn about his or her interests and abilities" (82%).

While parents' responses indicated that most learned a lot from the small-group discussion and found it very useful, their overall ratings tended to be lower than those for previous sessions. This was due to their high level of excitement. The parents paid rapt attention to what the guest youngsters were saying and were actively involved in a give-and-take with them. For many parents, the "best" part of the session was the opportunity to talk to the students who had "made it" in the work world. This again suggests that parents were better able to appreciate the hope and perseverance these young people displayed than what they, the youngsters, actually told them.

The major event of the session was the "graduation" which lasted for almost two hours. Each participant received a copy of the program, which started with brief talks by the project staff and was followed by a "special message" by the chairperson of the Department of Puerto Rican Studies at CUNY. Following this, the Director of CASE

presented each parent with a certificate acknowledging her/his participation in the program. Several of the co-trainers gave closing remarks. The meeting concluded with spontaneous speeches by several parents.

Parents' joy in the program was evident from their faces and from their comments. The atmosphere was charged with excitement. A warm bond was apparent between the speakers and the audience. Parents listened closely to each of the speakers and there was frequent laughter and applause to jokes and to the congratulatory statements of the speakers about other speakers and about participants. Parents appeared pleased and proud, though somewhat bashful, when they went up to receive their certificate. For many, this piece of paper represented the "best" part of the session.

During the final 15 or 20 minutes, five parents got up—unrehearsed—and spoke to the assembly. All expressed their heart-felt appreciation. Particularly notable was how touched and grateful they were that CASE had made such an effort on their behalf and shown such interest and concern for their children. One father said that this was the first time that anyone had attempted to provide practical advice and information for parents of handicapped children, such as himself. He wanted the program continued, and this suggestion was enthusiastically applauded. A mother, who introduced herself as a P.T.A. member, encouraged parents to be active in their P.T.A.; she said that parents could make a difference only if they spoke up for their children's rights—that they did, in fact, have the power to change things. She too was roundly applauded. Still another woman talked about having learned how to speak to her child and relate to him better (rather "than just asking if he is done with his homework").

Many parents stayed on long after the end.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Two cycles of the Parents-as-Career Educators project were implemented during the 1981-82 school year, the first involving participants from borough of the Bronx high schools and the second for Manhattan residents. Although the project touched the lives of 101 different parents of high school-aged handicapped children—and in positive, poignant, and productive ways—to some extent this first year must be considered as a pilot: problems of parent recruitment, overscheduling of sessions, training leaders, and refocusing the materials to better accord with the extreme disadvantage exemplified by the parent participants need further resolution. The project's revisions from the first to the second cycle indicates not only staff

awareness, but a responsiveness to these issues on their parts. Thus, there is every indication that the second year of this two-year program should result in even more positive outcomes. As it was, the first-year experience enormously benefitted participants.

The attitude of the project staff, which was reflected in the program's smooth and coordinated operation and warm and helpful atmosphere, was evident to parents, school and agency staff, and invited guests. It was one of the outstanding features of the project and very frequently commented upon. In addition to their concern, project staff demonstrated flexibility in their redesign of strategies and agendas as well as patience in trying to meet individual needs. Considering that a typical session involved a minimum of 35 parents, several with young children, 10 co-trainers, three or more presenters, resource people, evaluators, and a few other guests—in addition to print materials, refreshments, and less-than-adequate facilities—this was no small feat. Similar programs should strive for this type of personalized approach.

The recruitment of parents was primarily the responsibility of the high school special education teachers or coordinators who also functioned as co-trainers of the small workshop groups, together with representatives from other, community-based agencies and organizations. (Their—i.e., the latter co-trainers'—duties were largely limited to leading the small-group activities during the sessions, while the school representatives were called upon to perform a wider range of tasks: parent recruiter and group leader, as noted, as well as record keeper and, in the case of the two high schools hosting the program, workshop organizers. The 10 school co-trainers, one from each of the participating high schools, were also responsible for facilitating all school-related activities resulting from the program.) Because of the complexity of the trainers' task, we recommend that dual responsibility for the small groups be continued, but that consideration be given to paired leaders from the same high school. This increases the power base at the institution and assures that followup plans are put into effect.

Co-trainers recruited participants from among the parents of children in special education classes in their high schools. Although a large number of parents participated in the program, with the overwhelming majority being regular attendees, many more could have been accommodated. Each participating high school had a sizable number of handicapped students whose parents were not involved, probably for a variety of reasons ranging from time conflicts to personal reticence. An individualized recruitment effort, perhaps involving home visits beyond the scope of the co-trainers, may have increased the number of participants. Using program

"graduates" and involving the schools' entire special education and bilingual staffs is one alternative for accomplishing this.

The nature of the particular population that was recruited was largely unexpected and was the reason that staff revised the program plans, considerably modifying the scope of activities. As described, the participants were an extremely economically disadvantaged group: the Bronx parents more so than their Manhattan counterparts. Limited English-speaking ability was only one of the characteristics that resulted in a reduction in the planned activities; the English-Spanish, Spanish-English translations proved very time-consuming. However, under no circumstance should separate programs be offered; at most, small-group work should continue to be limited to people comfortable in one or the other language but, as occurred, the large assemblages should be conducted in both languages.

Participants' disadvantage showed in other ways that have programmatic implications. For example, their extreme shyness often made it difficult for co-trainers to elicit optimal interaction. Their nonfamiliarity with written materials made it difficult to design evaluation instruments that would have more clearly delineated the program's specific impact; furthermore, it restricted the kinds of activities they could be engaged in and the type of take-home work it was possible to assign. It also brought into question the usefulness of some of the handouts that were distributed and suggests, for the future, that careful attention be given to simplifying--by including only the most relevant information--the written materials. Participants in all programs, however, (and this one is no exception) like material they can take home; if not helpful to each at this specific moment in time, these materials are generally shared with other family members and friends and thus have the potential of reaching a wider audience.

Overall, the small-group activities were well-planned and executed; furthermore, they were appropriate for this parent population and covered some basic career education concepts. If anything, the small-group activities were overscheduled--not enough time was available to do the planned exercises and to review the assignments in great detail. Parents liked the opportunity this component allowed for individual contributions, for discussions of unique problems, and for interaction with one another and the co-trainers. Almost all reported trying the exercise with their child and came to appreciate the relation between career possibilities and personal preferences, attributes, and abilities. This part of the program expanded their knowledge of occupations, helped them understand their child's potential, and encouraged many parents to consider new occupations for themselves.

To a very great extent, the small-group component of each workshop session was the essence of the Parents-as-Career Educators project. This part of the program placed heavy demands upon the co-trainers, for which the training that was provided under the original design was adequate but not optimal. First, more time for training would have permitted staff to develop the co-trainers' group dynamics skills; it would also have allowed them to explore the basic concepts of career education in greater depth. The co-trainers initially recognized their need for this type of preparation and although satisfied with their own performance by the end of the project (and with ample justification for feeling this way), they developed an appreciation of the intricacies of small-group interpersonal skills. The preparation of co-trainers would also benefit if they could be provided with supplementary readings in the area of career education; this would save time during the planning meetings which could be better spent on leadership techniques.

The model of having the planning meeting precede the workshop session as closely as possible in time is an excellent strategy. It enables the co-trainers to conduct the session with their training in mind and allows for immediate followup and revision. Parents' questions or difficult problems encountered in any one workshop session can be reacted to in a timely manner. This scheduling model also has the added advantage of maintaining a very high level of involvement—both for parents and for co-trainers.

As described in the body of this report, the training of the co-trainers was a necessary part of the project. Some consideration should be given to expanding the time allotted to this component, primarily so that the leaders could be more thoroughly prepared to deal with the running of small workshop groups. Ideally, their training, which could start well in advance of the parent program, should focus first on recruitment, organizational, and recordkeeping responsibilities. Two sessions, with supplementary readings and assignments, should then be devoted to exploring the basic concepts of career education. Additional training time, before the workshop program, might be spent on parent-child relationships, especially the needs of parents of disabled youngsters. As indicated above, the planning session for each workshop session model should be retained in the form implemented this year.

The focus of these meetings should continue to be the small-group activities for parents and their use of the materials with their own child. If the administrative details are discussed and understood before the start of the program, the recruitment effort expanded to include more "recruiters," and co-trainers practiced in small-group leadership techniques, these meetings could be even more directed. As it was,

however, the co-trainers' opinions supported by those of the evaluators, makes it quite clear that the training that was provided resulted not only in feelings of competence on the part of leaders but in the desired outcomes for parent participants.

Holding the program in a high school presents several difficulties—notably that the space that can be utilized is often less than adequate—but the benefits far outweigh the problems. First, it brings parents to the school and for some, encourages them to go outside the geographic area with which they are most familiar. Parents' contact with a high school, and the fact that they are using the facilities and that the school administration has provided for their comfort and entertainment, reinforces the goal of involving parents in the education process. At the most simple level, it demonstrates that they are welcome in the building. The second advantage of holding the program in a school site is that children as well as faculty and administration see parents there; this creates an expectation on all their parts that the presence of parent in the school is natural and desirable.

Finally, for the host site especially, the use of the facility in this fashion demonstrates that parent programs, even after normal school hours, can be accommodated at relatively little cost or inconvenience.

The Parents-as-Career Educators project made use of many resources, primarily in the form of representatives from agencies, institutions, and organizations concerned with the education of the handicapped and their preparation for the world of work; there were, in addition, several people affiliated with major bilingual or Hispanic organizations as well as major employers of the disabled. In their roles as co-trainer in some instances, invited speaker, and/or at the resource tables, this proved to be an important part of the program. In addition to providing parents with very necessary information and an understanding of the wide range of services they could tap, these people were direct links to agencies; before the end of the school year, parents and school staff had already called upon them for assistance and it is apparent that more contacts will be made in the future.

To use these many resource people, it is crucial that staff continue to select them and to brief them with the same great care that was evidenced this year. As happened, an effort should be made to recruit speakers who are bilingual but if not possible, translations should continue. The benefits of Spanish-English translations are many and obvious, and project staff well understood the value even though it seriously reduced the time available for other activities.

Although it proved difficult to assess—partly because of parents' limited familiarity and ease with written evaluation instruments and partly as a result of

sacrifices in technique to accommodate the programmatic considerations of time—there were many indications that the project had a significant impact on parents (as well as on the other participants).

To begin with, there were changes in attitudes and beliefs on the part of participants. School staff, for example, came to view parents more emphatically—a result which will translate in a greater willingness to engage in these and similar activities with parent groups. The school staff also learned a great deal about their own capabilities and this is bound to be reflected in their improved ability to shape—have input into—programs based on their own strengths.

For parents, the attitudinal changes were equally if not more impressive. They began to view their child as more independent and many began to confront the fact that a career could be planned and prepared for. As a result of participation, parents came to believe in children's individual differences and in people's rights to seek vocations that match their likes and dislikes as well as strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps more important than anything else, however, were parents' revised attitudes toward the outside world: they no longer saw the educational system and beyond as disinterested or unconcerned but rather as offering a range of support and opportunity. They unquestionably viewed the project as having provided them with encouragement and hope.

While they were less able to express it directly, parents also learned a great many things congruent with the project's objectives: about the rights of disabled people, the obligations of the school system, the needs of employers, and how to work with agencies and institutions. They also learned more about relating to their disabled child, including some techniques that have applicability to their other children. By the end of the project year, these participants were actively engaged in working with their youngsters and with the schools and outside organizations.

Parents' personal growth was evident in many ways. They felt more at ease with the school system and came to the school more frequently. They were more active in suggesting alternatives to their children. They formed friendships with one another. They were motivated to participate in new ventures ranging from enrolling in programs that would lead them to a more satisfying career to those that would provide them with more developed skills to assume a leadership role within the community. In groups they began to show movement as well: particularly in attempting to establish themselves as a special needs group within existing organizations, like the parents association.

Not all parent participants did all of everything. The drama of this program lay

in its stimulating all parents to do some one thing new. This kind of preparation, coupled with the hope it provided, represents an important stage in the realization that parents can—and indeed should—play a primary role in the career development of the handicapped bilingual child.

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November 1982

TEACHING PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Project Period 1

Prepared by

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May 1982

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TEACHING PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH

EVALUATION ISSUES

I. Introduction

The purpose of this investigation is 1) to provide an external evaluation of the project known as "Teaching Parents As Career Educators for Handicapped Youth" in reference to stated goals and objectives, and 2) to suggest new practices for achievement of program objectives.

In order to accomplish the stated goals of this external evaluation, the following activities were undertaken:

- 1) Review of project materials, e.g. proposal, workshop agendas, resource materials distributed at workshops;
- 2) Interview project staff;
- 3) Interview field-based co-trainers;
- 4) Observe a parent-training workshop; and
- 5) Interview parents.

Based on the performance of the five activities noted above, this report was prepared. The investigator will meet subsequently with university project staff to review and discuss the content of the evaluation report, the methodology used in data collection, and the feasibility of the recommendations made.

It should be noted that the quoted statements from parents and from co-trainers used in this report were based on verbatim notes taken during telephone and/or face-to-face interviews.

II. Review of Project Materials

A. The Proposal

This project, which is designed to promote the career growth and development of high school bilingual, handicapped students by training their parents, has noteworthy goals which are supported by the professional literature. It is concerned with a vital aspect of each person's life - the choice of a job, career, or profession - which "is critical to youth development . . . and progress toward productive adulthood (London, 1981, p. 57)."

In general terms, Bloom (1977) explores the idea of the "teaching home" as a way for schools to encourage active partnerships with parents. More specifically, Beane, Lipka, and Ludewig (1980) believe that the school can influence parent-teacher-child relationships in the area of career guidance, for example, by conducting parent workshops, at which career information, occupational trends, and decision-making skills are taught. The expectation is that this cadre of trained parents will become "seed personnel" in their homes by holding discussions, playing occupational games, and role-playing with their children based on the content of the career seminars attended. Such interactive relationships can provide parents of all children with a sharpened awareness that may improve their ability to help their children make the transition from school to the world-of-work.

The goals of this project are, thus, legitimized by the literature as suitable and appropriate ones for the parents of all children. They derive additional importance as worthwhile goals within the context of the special needs of bilingual parents of handicapped pupils to become career educators and advocates.

As stated in the proposal, for the purpose of accomplishing the goals of parent education and advocacy with this special population, the university staff will:

- 1) set up liaisons with bilingual community organizations, parent advocacy groups, and high school special education departments;
- 2) conduct training sessions bilingually;
- 3) distribute materials in English and in Spanish at each workshop session;
- 4) select a population of parents with children enrolled in Special Education classes from the New York City high schools;
- 5) concentrate on assisting parents to know more about occupational opportunities as they pertain to their children's interests and abilities; thus, enabling them to motivate their children and to build their self-confidence for the transition from school to work.

Based on the preponderance of literature and this investigator's knowledge and experience, there seems to be theoretical acceptance of the educational and advocacy functions which parents can assume to assist their children fulfill their career potential; this theoretical recognition outstrips, by far, the development and implementation of parent education programs in career education. There is tremendous need, therefore, to expose parents of mainstream children; this need is far greater for parents with children in SE classes, and greater still for bilingual/bicultural parents of handicapped children, who are often unknowledgeable about occupational opportunities for their children, threatened by the bureaucracy of school systems, and isolated by cultural difference.

It appears, therefore, that this project fulfills a vital need by helping bilingual parents of handicapped pupils, who are enrolled in inner-city SE classes, to become more knowledgeable, insightful, and facilitative of their children's vocational future.

B. Materials for Parent-Training Sessions

This investigator reviewed the agendas developed for parent-education sessions. Each agenda had a well-organized and systematic structure, which included a theme, aims, projected outcomes, and activities (e.g. small-group, large-

group), and evaluation. Agendas were developmental and sequential, presenting a variety of activities such as dyad discussions, lecture, panel presentations, and oral/written responses to career inventories and questionnaires for parental involvement.

For example, at Meeting #3 on April 27, 1982 where the theme was "Providing Services to Children with Special Needs: The Role of the School," parents were provided with information about the legal rights of handicapped children, and witnessed a skills demonstration to help them identify their children's interests and abilities related to career development. During this meeting, parents were encouraged to meet with resource personnel from CBEOC, AHRC, UPA, and the PR Forum; also, they engaged in a card sort activity which included a homework assignment instructing them how to use these cards with their children.

At the next session on May 4th, the concept of values orientation was introduced, thus making the process of career choice three dimensional--interests, abilities, and values. Additional work on identifying and learning how to use community resources and services was provided through discussions with several resource persons and presentations by personnel from Hostos Community College, OVR, and the NYC Board of Education.

Overall comments concerning these developmental and sequential agendas for parent-education sessions are that they were:

- 1) well planned with the program goals and objectives in mind;
- 2) interrelated and integrated with one another;
- 3) cognizant of the need for review and reinforcement of preceding session content;
- 4) structured with both cognitive and affective components;

- 5) coordinated to use resource personnel, resource materials, and panel presentations at appropriate intervals;
- 6) varied and diverse in format and design to stimulate interest and encourage maximum parental participation;
- 7) practical and topical to meet the needs of parent participants;
- 8) pedagogically sound, e.g. use of homework for reinforcement, and use of feedback following homework assignments to develop concept of responsible "seed personnel";
- 9) inclusive of didactic input and experiential activities;
- 10) evaluated on a session-to-session basis in order to maintain a constant barometer of effectiveness, improve ongoing planning, and include, where feasible, parent input into future sessions.

Agendas included a time estimate for each activity. Based on the rich and full agendas planned for sessions, as well as the relative sophistication of some of the career education concepts presented (e.g. infusion, values orientation), questions must be raised about the time allotment for each session totally and/or the total number of sessions provided for the realization of the program's ambitious content and process objectives.

Parent involvement and participation were further motivated and stimulated by the hospitable refreshment/social period with which each training session began, by the minimal stipends for carfare offered, and by relevant extra-curricular activities planned. An example of such an activity was the "Leadership and Effective Communication Skills" course offered on three consecutive Saturdays in May 1982 under the aegis of The Puerto Rican Leadership Training Project, the CASE/IRDOE Graduate Center/CUNY, and Cornell University's New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations. According to the descriptive flyer, "this non-credit/free course is designed to assist you in becoming a more effective 'leader' through Public Speaking, Parliamentary Procedures and Leadership Skills

training."

III. The University Project Staff

A. Interview Data

1. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with members of the university project staff for the purpose of learning about the project in greater detail. Each member of the project staff, in turn, volunteered information and offered materials which would be helpful to the investigator in assessing the facts about the program.

The investigator, therefore, states that the project staff was cooperative, open, candid, sharing, and eager, to present data concerning all aspects of the program. For example, the investigator was given ready access to the proposal, to lists of co-trainers and parents, to workshops agendas, and to resource materials distributed at workshops sessions.

As each member of the university staff was interviewed, this investigator became aware of his or her conviction about the soundness of the project's underlaying philosophy, and enthusiasm about the quality of participation from co-trainers and from parents.

Because the university staff members had been present at all workshop sessions, in addition to being actively involved in the planning and feedback processes related to workshop agendas, they were knowledgeable about the program's implementation. More important, they knew the co-trainers and parents well and could discriminate among them concerning their special needs, as well as their contributions to the project.

2. Interviews with co-trainers and with parents were conducted on an individual basis, using a combination of telephone and face-to-face contacts. In all cases, co-trainers and parents, when approached, were eager to make evaluative

comments.

Although the comments from co-trainers and parents were diverse and covered a wide range of opinion concerning the ways in which the program had influenced their lives (See a later section of this report for greater detail.), there was unanimity about the professional competence of the university staff. More important, they were impressed, and often amazed, by the professional attitude of the staff, all of whom were perceived to be emphatic and caring individuals. While the skills and competence of the university staff were regarded highly, their ability to relate to participants--as co-trainers or as parents--in the affective domain was regarded as unique. Parents, in particular, stated that they had often met educators with professional skills; only rarely had they felt that these professionals "really cared" about them or their "kids"; finding trained and competent professionals, with sensitivity, empathy, and understanding, in addition, was "a first" or "rare" experience.

During interviews with parents, other typical, spontaneous responses regarding the caliber of the university staff were that:

"The program directors are wonderful, couldn't be better."

"They treat us like people--with dignity."

"They really helped me change my life, how I feel about myself, and my child; I can't say enough good things about what they did for me."

"They set the tone for everybody--from the top down, people were respectful."

Comments from the co-trainers concerning the university staff were, also, overwhelmingly positive. Examples of typical statements were that:

"The greatest strength was the flexibility and expertise of the people who ran the program."

"The people who coordinated the program--the ideas they've tried to put across--are right on target."

"The staff members were dedicated and committed to making the program work."

"They were always present, working hard to make the program successful."

"They provided the co-trainers and the parents with a rewarding experience in career education."

B. Comments and Suggestions

There were central themes around which to group perceptions of the university staff; these perceptions from all sources gave high ratings for professional competence and attitudinal suitability. Parents and co-trainers alike corroborated, through frequent and spontaneous references, the feeling that this project staff was special in the areas of "know how" and caring. The investigator agrees with this assessment based on her individual interviews with them, observed interactions among the staff members, and observations of the staff in action with co-trainers and parents at a parent-education workshop.

It is difficult to make recommendations when the data are so positive. Since the project staff seems to represent an excellent amalgam of skills and attitudes, it could continue to perform--personally and professionally--in the same way it has been doing.

IV. Co-Trainers

A. Interview Data

Co-trainers were written into the proposal as parent recruiters and group leaders. There were 15 co-trainers involved in the program, 5 representing bilingual community organizations and parent advocacy groups; 10 from the participating high schools' SE departments. This investigator interviewed 12 co-trainers (4 agency; 8

high school), who were cooperative and willing about responding with evaluative comments.

Comments by the co-trainers concerning the positive aspects of the program covered a broad spectrum of opinion with clusters around several important issues. For example, most co-trainers related their comments concerning the program's positives to the benefits derived by the parents and their children, stating that:

"Each parent benefitted from the social value of being brought together with other parents of handicapped children, and interacting on a high level."

"The program helped to reduce the feelings of isolation experienced by parents of handicapped children."

"The program motivated parents to continue a different lifestyle. It influenced them by making them more aware of their rights, by urging them to come to schools to exercise those rights, by even going back to school to continue their own educations, and by bringing them closer to their own children."

"It helped parents become more aware of what's out there, in terms of careers, for them and their children."

"It opened parents' eyes, because some of them didn't even know about IEP's or their rights regarding reevaluation."

"It gives a positive way of thinking to the parents and the children involved. I feel that, formerly, they had no place to turn, and now with others like themselves, there is a feeling of hope and security."

Other co-trainers emphasized additional aspects as strengths of the program. For example, comments stressed the excellent informational level maintained at the training sessions:

"Information contained in each session was good."

"The parents are not getting the information from the schools that there are programs to help them become advocates for their children and more effective parents of handicapped youngsters. This program disseminated this needed information."

"The material in each session was topical, pertinent, realistic, and valuable."

Several of the co-trainers noted that a great strength of the program was "the working relationship established between co-trainer and parent." Elaboration of this point was stated as follows:

"When the relationship was established. . .everything flowed from that."

"Because of this relationship, parents responded and were helped to relate better to their kids, particularly when we used things like role-playing--good and bad."

Co-trainers made comments, too, about the high caliber of the university staff, which are included in an earlier section of this report.

When queried about negative aspects of the program, many co-trainers had difficulty because they were so enthusiastic about the positives. Even when some co-trainers finally came up with weaknesses for this program, which they described as "very good" or "outstanding," there was often an implicit positive contained. For example, many co-trainers felt that "the program was not long enough," that "more time and more sessions were needed," because "we didn't have enough time and often seemed to be rushing from one thing to another."

Further, it was stated that this program, which was so valuable, was directed at high school handicapped pupils, and, therefore, "it was happening too late." A program like this, they said, "should happen on the junior high school level." "The children here are in the last year of high school and their parents are just being asked to give them career information." "The parents must be reached at an earlier time."

Several co-trainers were able to identify significant weaknesses of the program. For example, in view of the general excellence of the program, it was felt that more parents should have been recruited, and that some parent participants should have attended on a more regular basis. While it was noted that similar

problems beset other worthwhile programs in urban areas due to work schedules, child-care responsibilities, and other commitments, there was the feeling that co-trainers needed more assistance, training, and time to recruit parents. It was mentioned, also, that the job of recruitment should not be left solely to SE personnel.

Some co-trainers referred to the time the workshops were held and the geographic locations of the workshop sites as deterrents to parental recruitment and continued involvement.

Although all co-trainers felt that the concept of bilingualism was a programmatic plus, some described the reality of conducting meetings in two languages as difficult to implement. Problems related, too, to the lack of basic skills in any language which made some parents unable to write things down or understand career terminology.

B. Comments and Suggestions

This program received "very good" or "outstanding" ratings on a unanimous basis from co-trainers, particularly with regard to content of workshop agendas, caliber of the university staff, parent/child gains, and staff/parent interrelationships.

Although only a few co-trainers indicated that more help, training, and time were needed for recruitment of additional parents, this is an important criticism. Closely tied to the issue of recruitment is the one related to improved parental attendance, which might be resolved if the days and times for training sessions, as well as the site locations, were experimented with and varied. In addition, placing the task of parent recruitment in the hands of a small committee chaired by the school principal or agency chairperson, rather than with co-trainers, might add clout

to the function.

The concept of bilingualism adds a dimension to the program; its implementation, however, poses some problems. One co-trainer provided a recommendation which should be explored:

"I think it would be positive to separate the parents into English-speaking and nonEnglish-speaking groups. Conducting the entire session in two languages slows the work, and neither group gets enough. I realize that provision must be made to address some Spanish-speaking parents in their own language because it is more productive as a means of coping with cultural dissonance and their embarrassment about not speaking English."

Implementation of this recommendation might necessitate the formation of small groups on the basis of language facility, following large-group presentations conducted in both English and Spanish. To overcome the problems which some parents have with written English, more oral communication activities might be included.

Further recommendations relate to the overall excellence of the program, thereby, mandating it for parents of handicapped youngsters at earlier levels than high school, with more time and numbers of sessions devoted to parent-training.

V. A Parent-Training Session

This investigator attended the final parent-training session, which culminated in graduation ceremonies for parents who had completed the program.

The agenda for this session was as follows:

- 1) Theme: Special Education Students in the World of Work
- 2) Aim: To provide parents and their special education children with information and ways that handicapped youth can use in getting a job.
- 3) Outcomes: Parents and their handicapped children will be more aware of:
 - roadblocks encountered by special education students

in securing a job.

- how special education students overcome hurdles in finding employment.
- problems faced by handicapped youth with managers and co-workers.
- what schools should do to enhance the employability skills of handicapped students.

4) Activities: Preliminary

Major

The theme, aim, and projected outcomes of this final parent-training session seemed appropriate in that they dealt with the transition process for students from school to work and placed emphases on ways in which parents and handicapped children might become more aware of and more skillful in finding resolutions to obstacles in employment. It was appropriate, also, that the parents attended this session in the company of their handicapped children.

When the preliminary activities--attendance, payment of stipends, and social period, during which refreshments were served--were completed, university staff members greeted the assemblage formally and gave information concerning the major activities planned.

Following the formal announcements about the agenda, instructions were given and places assigned for the formation of small groups, each of which consisted of a co-trainer, parents and their handicapped children, and a resource person. Resource persons for this session were handicapped students, who had made career choices and were working in jobs related to those choices. They had been invited to make presentations in the small groups, moving from group to group at 15-minute intervals approximately. During their stay in each small group, these resource

youngsters talked with pride and animation about their experiences in getting and holding a job. Co-trainers, who had been given an instruction guide earlier, facilitated the questioning and interaction among the parents, their children, and the resource persons.

This investigator visited three small groups and observed that each group used the time with resource persons productively. Questions raised, following the resource person's initial presentation, were relevant and practical. Examples of questions asked were:

- 1) "How much money do you make?"
- 2) "What makes your job interesting?"
- 3) "What did you learn in school that was of most help to you in getting your job?"
- 4) "Have you gotten any raises since you started this job?"
- 5) "How do your co-workers and boss act toward you?"
- 6) "What do your co-workers and boss like most about you?"

Each resource person observed talked about the importance of doing the best work possible; they stressed the values of proper job attitudes and habits--working hard, being on time, being dependable, e.g. One resource person's voice was tinged with emotion as he said:

"I'm a good messenger. I can find any place I'm sent to. I use maps. My boss knows that when I go out I'll do the job. I'm learning all about the City, too. Best of all, I'm responsible!"

Other comments made by resource persons which were indicative of pride in present job performance and/or future occupational goals were:

"I want to be a chef some day and have my own place."

"The printing company doesn't want me to leave. I've been there over four years."

"I work outside no matter what the weather--no matter how cold."

"I walk over 30 blocks a day. I like the work."

Co-trainers fielded questions, often clarifying them when necessary. Discussions in the small group moved freely from Spanish to English, and back again, for more effective communication. The climate of the three groups observed was informal and relaxed--pleasantries and laughter often punctuated the lively exchanges of information.

The agenda contained an estimated time for the completion of each activity. When the time for this major activity had been used, a staff member brought closure to this phase, requesting that the assemblage proceed to the room reserved for the Parents Awards Ceremony.

Parents Awards Ceremony

This awards ceremony was the closing activity of the final parent-training session and of the program as well. Its primary purpose was to acknowledge and honor the parents who completed the program by presenting them with certificates.

University staff members were present to perform special roles in this culminating ceremony. Following formal greetings and the introduction of special guests, the guest speaker was introduced and made the graduation address.

Certificates were presented following the guest speaker's address. After each parent was called by name and presented with her or his certificate, co-trainers and parents were invited to make spontaneous remarks concerning the quality of the program and its meaning on a personal level.

Examples of extemporaneous remarks were:

Parent: "The program gave me ways to go about getting information for myself and my child."

- Parent: "I was appointed, through the PTA, to head a SE committee. I held a meeting and invited the principal and the head of the SE division. Without this program, I wouldn't have had the courage to do this! Also, I've been nominated for PTA president next year."
- Co-trainer: "The parents taught us, too. It was a mutually-enriching experience. What was done here is good for all children, not just for SE youngsters."
- Co-trainer: "These CUNY folks are great workers who showed that they cared about parents, children, and co-trainers. They know how to do things right! The workshops were uplifting. It was a joy to work with all of you!"
- Parent: "We're so happy now. Before we had no place to turn. God bless you! That says it all."
- Parent: "We've learned a lot. We've learned to communicate with our children a lot better. We know where to go to get help when our children finish high school. Our horizons have been opened."

When the ceremonies were concluded, evaluation forms were distributed for return by the parents in stamped, self-addressed envelopes to the university staff.

Throughout the awards ceremonies, activities were conducted in Spanish and in English. For example, the guest speaker, who is bilingual, made his speech in English and then in Spanish.

Comments and Suggestions

This parent-training session was a model one because it incorporated a theme, aim, projected outcomes, and activities consistent with the proposal's goals of parent education and advocacy.

As a final training session, it was exemplary because it focused on a terminal stage in an individual's schooling (in this case, high school) which articulates with The world-of-work. This transition, although exciting, may be anxiety-ridden for many young people and their parents; for SE youngsters and their parents it must be

even more traumatic. By presenting former SE pupils, who are now gainfully employed, as resource persons, the session provided important and necessary role models to the parents of handicapped youngsters, and, more important, to the handicapped pupils themselves.

When these young people spoke with pride in their accomplishments and of their ability to "hold their own" with so-called "normal" workers, the message was loud and clear that SE pupils can find jobs, particularly if they have the support of parents who know how to use resource materials and advocacy groups in the field of career education.

The cognitive level of this final training session was appropriate; information was given; facts were stated; questions were raised and answered; learning took place. On the affective level, interaction among the small-group participants seemed free and cordial; parents and their children seemed comfortable about raising concerns; the climate of the groups seemed trustful; the co-trainers seemed empathic and understanding, often clarifying a question or rephrasing it respectfully so that the "asker" felt accepted, rather than "put down."

Another great strength of this session was the presence of parents with their handicapped youngsters; this dramatized their partnership, with educators and agency personnel, in the joint search for occupational alternatives, job training, and financial independence, leading to enhanced feelings of self-worth, through employment.

The entire session appeared so smooth and easy that it was deceptive. The assumption that this kind of clockwork perfection comes easily is a false one. It is evident that a great deal of planning preceded the date and time on which the session was held. To avoid repetition and belaboring a point, all the overall

positives listed concerning the developmental and sequential agendas reviewed by this investigator (see pages 3 and 4) were observable as the actual session was being conducted.

The parents awards ceremony was truly "icing on the cake." It gave the university staff an opportunity to involve community agencies and special guests in honoring the parents, while their children were watching. At the same time, co-trainers and parents were "moved to testify", in the cognitive and affective domains, about the quality of the program. A fitting and affecting tribute was provided for all who had been apart of the program. In addition, parents went away with tangible evidence, in the form of certificates, that they had been involved in a solid learning experience.

Some inherent problems exist within the carefully - timed framework of this and other agendas, and in the implementation of the bilingual concept. It is certainly a plus that the agenda for this final training session was so rich and full; however, there was evidence, at times, of too tight a schedule which did not permit staying with activities long enough to thoroughly "milk" them. For example, it seemed that the small groups were enthralled by the presentations of the handicapped young people; time was called for them to move on to the next small group before there was group readiness to have them do so. Perhaps fewer presentations in each group for longer periods of time (e.g. 35 minutes) would resolve this problem. Adding more sessions and increasing the total time of each session are considerations, also.

Implementation of the bilingual concept in the small groups seemed to work well; translating and interpreting were used on demand; English and Spanish were used naturally and interchangeably. During the parent awards ceremony, however,

the process of presenting and repeating in first one language and then the other seemed cumbersome, stilted, and slow. This aspect of the program should be examined and alternatives explored in order to facilitate the bilingual content of the training sessions.

The utilization of student aides as hosts and hostesses, as well as the cooperation of a local restaurateur, who supplied the workshop refreshments, added to the gracious, hospitable atmosphere of the session.

VI. Parents

A. Interview Data

Parents were extremely willing and cooperative when approached to become part of the outside evaluation process. Despite the fact that many of the parents had problems with English and the investigator is not bilingual, there was sufficient communication to establish the fact that their feeling about the program were very positive.

Although a large percentage of the parent participants had Spanish - sounding surnames, they were representative of diverse and varying Hispanic backgrounds and cultures. Other cultural and ethnic groups were participants in the program (e.g. Caribbean blacks; blacks from the southern and northern parts of the United States; East Indian from the Caribbean).

In telephone and in face-to-face interviews, parents were asked to offer answers to three major questions:

- 1) What did this program mean to you personally?
- 2) How has this program changed what you do (or will do) with or feel about your child?
- 3) How has the program changed what you do (or will do) at your child's school?

These three levels of responses were often incorporated into parents' answers which followed their own organization and interpretation. Examples of parent responses appear below:

"The program was helpful in many ways. It made it easier for me to talk to my son. I feel more comfortable talking to him about jobs. I'm proud that I only missed one session. I'm sorry the program is over now, because I need more."

"I learned a lot about many things. Best of all, I met other people with the same problems. I'm happy to know that I'm not alone. My daughter and I never had any secrets. We do talk more now about jobs and I have more knowledge. My daughter has only been in school one year. I never went to meetings before, but I will do so in the future. I'll talk to the guidance counselor."

"I learned so much. Before I felt upset about my son's working becuse he is 19. My son was worried too. Now he has a chance like normal people. My son needs vocational tests. I see many here so willing and able to help handicapped people, so I don't feel so alone any more. I know how to get help, so I feel happy. I go to the PTA sometimes. It is hard because I have two handicapped boys and I work. I will go to get help more now, I think, because I don't feel separate from the whole world any more. In this program I have made so many new friends and have seen so many old ones."

"I learned so many new things, made some new friends, and now feel less alone. It was fun, too, to learn about jobs for my son. I told my wife all about what happened. I talk to my son now about his future - jobs and education. My son expresses interest in more jobs than before. I always went to the PTA meetings. I would like the program to go on for a longer time."

"I learned a lot. I'm from the Caribbean, so I had no knowledge of New York City until I was introduced to these workshops. I didn't think my son would have a chance for a job. I feel confident now seeing that the knowledge gained from these classess say that he will be able to get training and be able to hold some sort of job. I feel happy. The classes have made me more aware of my rights. It has changed the way we talk to each other. He talks about his future, too. We share what happens in the meetings. They gave us cards for use at home between parent and child; the cards set up situations for career discussions between parent and child. I feel more comfortable about school because I'm acquainted with people and resources available."

"I got lots of information. It certainly helps me as a parent. I have lots of discussions now with my kid because I know some of the answers. I'm going to be more active now."

One parent who works as a paraprofessional in SE program talked about the ways in which the program has improved her professional performance:

"The information was helpful and practical. I took the information first for my own child. In the process, I found ways to give help to others as a result of my training. I made copies of the material used in the workshops for other parents. I certainly feel better about what I do with my own child and great because I'm doing a better job with other SE parents."

The program produced at least one "star" whose leadership potential should make her very influential in the school her child attends. This parent rated the program "fantastic, because it has given me a better feeling about myself. For a long time I felt depressed about my son's future after high school. I was worried about that. This program has opened doors for me and my son." She stated further that "the program had given her, saying that "it has encouraged me in my work with the PTA. I am treasurer of the PTA and next year, hopefully, I'll be the PTA president. The program at Cornell was especially helpful, because I got ideas about how to run and hold a meeting. The workshops were wonderful. I have been sharing the materials from these workshops with other SE parents. I have even xeroxed materials for other parents." She spoke of the future saying that "I hope there will be a continuation of this program. I was so happy to be part of this. It gave me courage to do things. At one of the recent PTA meetings, I brought up the need for SE department. The present PTA president told me that SE was a mini school in the big school; however, she appointed me head of a special committee. I said I would call a meeting. I called a meeting to which I invited the principal and the head of the SE division. We had a very good meeting."

Several parents reflected on the fact that the program was ending and speculated on the next step. They express hope that the schools would institutionalize a similar program for all SE parents or that the university staff would continue their involvement in some way.

Comments and Suggestions

There is no doubt that this program was effective in meeting the needs of parents of handicapped pupils by preparing them as career educators and child advocates. Even parents who had serious language problems in English described the program as "very good," as helping them "feel better and not so alone," and as giving them "much needed information."

In view of the extremely positive ratings of this program, it is recommended that it be conducted on the junior high school level, as well as high school level. Parents who have completed this program should be brought together for followup activities and progress reports at appropriate intervals during the coming year.

VII. Summary

This investigator feels that the stated goals of the proposal were realized in terms of its intention to expand and refine parent efforts by having parents assume roles as career educators, career education advocates, and advocates for general rights and services for handicapped children under pertinent legislation. Based on the evaluation comment of parents, it was evident that training sessions were successful in developing skills and competencies in the 1) personal - social area; 2) occupational - vocational area; and 3) advocacy area. Through didactic presentation of workshop content and the experiential interactions and strategies in small groups, the cognitive and effective goals were support and implemented.

Training sessions were highly structured, well organized, and well planned, utilizing the input of co-trainers, as well as the data generated by ongoing evaluation from parents, to provide for flexibility and change.

The rapport among all the human components in the program was noteworthy; this was perceived in the relationships among university staff, co-trainers, and

parents; between English-speaking and nonEnglish-speaking parents; among handicapped youngsters, their parents, and the handicapped resource persons at the final training session. The university staff set an empathic, caring, and respectful tone; this modeling became characteristic of all relationships.

The literature legitimizes the goal of career education for all parents. These needs are greater for this underserved population - parents of special education children, whose feelings of isolation are even more intense if they are "language poor" in English. Thus, the program was responsive to those real and felt needs of this parent population.

Although the report presents interview data in different sections as applicable to co-trainers, parents, e.g., there are central threads in the comments which corroborate and validate the rating of the program as "very good" or "outstanding."

On page 3 of this report (item 5), mention was made of the positive way in which resource personnel, resource materials, and panel presentations were coordinated for use at appropriate intervals. It should be stated, also, that the resource materials, distributed in English and Spanish, were sometimes tailor-made to fit the specifications of the program model and its special populations. In general, they appeared to be practical, sound in career orientation, work-value oriented, and non-sexist materials, which would motivate "hands on" experience for SE pupils and their parents.

Major areas to be investigated and explored for possible change include: - the need for

- 1) additional help, training, and time for co-trainers to recruit parents;
- 2) examination of ways to implement the bilingual aspects of the program more effectively;

- 3) consideration of other time frames and time modules for conducting parent-training sessions.

Recommendations concerning these and other areas for investigation are included in each section of the report titled "Comments and Suggestions."

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TRAINING BILINGUAL PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS
FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH, 1982-83

(Internal Evaluation of Year Two)

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June 1983

TRAINING BILINGUAL PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH, 1982-83

The internal evaluation for the second year of the program 1982-83 used the same instruments and statistical methods used in project year 1, 1981-82. Because the internal evaluation report of the previous year represents a full detailing of project goals and activities that apply equally well to the second year, no attempt has been made to report all these descriptive details.

Outcomes for Parents

Parents were given the same questionnaire at the beginning and end of the program in order to assess changes in their attitudes and knowledge. As shown in Table 1, there was an increase in percentage of parents who recognized the correct answer on all of the items. Most of the gains were very large. For example, by the end of the program all of the parents knew that there are organizations which offer special training for children with disabilities, and they also all agreed with the statement "I am better able to help my child decide on a career because of this program."

All of the parents in the fall cycle and 96% in the spring now were able to name two organizations that help handicapped people. This is to be compared with 41% and 39% who could do so at the start of the fall and spring cycles.

When the program began, 58% of the parents in the fall cycle and 71% in the spring indicated that they though it was true that "some jobs that used to be closed to people with special needs are no longer closed to them." At the end of the program, 92% and 91% felt that this was a true statement.

In the fall cycle, there was a strong improvement in the awareness by parents that important things can be done to help a child in his career choice before he is in high school. In the spring cycle there was a significant improvement in appreciation of the help which can be obtained from friends and family in finding a job.

For open-ended items in the post-survey, there were many reasons to the question "What new thing did you learn about your child through this program?" One parent said "that no door to his future progress is closed to him." Another responded "that he can cope quite well in the activity he has chosen," while another said "she can do more than I expected."

The role of agencies was frequently mentioned in the responses to the question about what new thing the parents had learned. One parent said they had learned "that there is a valid reason for him to be somewhat frustrated about what his life career will be, but there are agencies available that can help." Another parent said they had learned "the function of OVR in helping my child pursue his future career." Another parent replied that they had learned about "specific organizations, resource persons that can be contacted, encouragement and perhaps strategies in approaching them, something on the content of available programs and value of agencies, and increased skill for exploring career interest and potential of my child." Another parent said that they had learned "how to listen to what they are saying."

TABLE 1

Pre and Postprogram Comparison of Parents' Knowledge About Services for Disabled People
(Figures in Percentages), by Cycle

ITEMS	Pre-Program (Mean)*						Post-Program (Mean)*					
	False		True		Don't Know		False		True		Don't Know	
	CYCLE		CYCLE		CYCLE		CYCLE		CYCLE		CYCLE	
The law says the HS must give children with disabilities special activities	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
	28	24	50	43	22	33	25	23	75	65	0	32
Once every year, the school must evaluate my child's special needs	11	19	84	71	5	20	8	22	9	69	0	9
There are organizations that offer special job training for children with disabilities	0	5	90	71	10	24	0	0	100	100	0	0
If I'm not happy with my child's special school program there are definite things I can do	6	10	82	76	12	14	0	5	83	91	17	4
People with disabilities have a harder time choosing a career than people without any	39	29	55	57	6	14	33	13	67	83	0	4
Some jobs that used to be closed to people with special needs are no longer closed to them	16	5	58	71	26	24	0	4	92	91	8	5
I can name two organizations that help handicapped people	6	22	41	39	53	39	0	0	100	96	0	4
An employer has the right to ask for references	0	5	95	86	5	9	0	0	100	96	0	4
I am better able to help my child decide and career because of this program			NOT APPLICABLE				0	0	100	0	0	17
Because of this program I know more about the kinds of jobs that are right for my handicapped child			NOT APPLICABLE				0	5	92	77	8	18

* Preprogram N=19

* Postprogram N=12

TABLE 2

Pre and Postprogram Comparisons of Parent Attitudes to the Career Development of their Disabled Child

(Figures in Percentages), Cycle by Cycle

ITEM	Preprogram(Mean) ¹		Postprogram(Mean) ²	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
By the time a child is in high school, parents cannot do much to help him or her	1.68	1.43	2.67*	1.39
It is the school's responsibility to help my child plan a career	2.58	2.80	2.33	2.91
Because of her or his disability, my child needs special help from the school	3.42	3.62	3.58	3.82
Once a child decides on a career she or he should stick to it	2.47	2.57	2.67	2.09
It's best for a child to go on a job interview alone	3.00	3.29	3.42	3.08
Friends and family are the best source for finding a job	2.68	2.57	3.00	3.26*
It's hard to get your own child to talk about how she or he is doing in school	2.42	2.52	3.08	2.57
What a person likes should be considered in the career she or he chooses	3.53	3.80	3.67	3.68
Because of my child's special problems, there are only a few careers open to her or him	2.21	2.39	2.33	2.68
Children should decide on a career by themselves	2.68	2.33	3.17	2.61

Scale

- 1.0 = strongly disagree
- 2.0 = disagree a little
- 3.0 = agree a little
- 4.0 = strongly agree

* Pre-post difference is significant at the .02 level of confidence.

¹ Preprogram N=19

² Postprogram N=12

TABLE 3

Pre and Postprogram Comparisons of the Frequency of Select Parent Behaviors
(in percentages), by Cycle

ITEM		Oftun	Sometimes	Not often	Plan to
		F*/S*	F*/S*	F*/S*	F*/S*
Work with school people on my child's IEP	pre ¹ post ²	22/35 30/33	44/35 20/33	6/0 20/10	28/30 30/24
Go to the school's meeting for parents	pre post	28/38 42/39	55/48 42/35	11/9 8/13	6/4 8/13
Make suggestions about what my child should do after HS	pre post	37/14 18/43	31/52 54/35	16/10 10/9	16/24 18/13
Go to community organizations to get help for my child	pre post	33/21 60/23	28/16 20/12	17/26 10/6	22/37 10/59
Try to learn about what special rights my child has because of his/her disability	pre post	42/48 75/50	26/26 8/32	16/5 0/4	16/21 17/14
Show my child books and magazines about careers	pre post	28/26 42/27	50/48 58/50	6/5 0/5	16/21 0/18
Try to get my child to tell me about what she/he likes or is good at	pre post	63/65 75/50	37/30 25/36	0/0 0/9	0/5 0/5
Talk to people about the right kind of job for my child	pre post	37/30 25/20	16/20 59/55	26/5 8/5	21/45 8/20

*F = Fall cycle, in percentages

*S = Spring cycle, in percentages

¹Preprogram N=19

²Postprogram N=12

TABLE 3

Pre and Postprogram Comparisons of the Frequency of Select Parent Behaviors
(in percentages), by Cycle

ITEM		Often	Sometimes	Not often	Plan to
		F*/S*	F*/S*	F*/S*	F*/S*
Work with school people on my child's IEP	pre ¹ post ²	22/35 30/33	44/35 20/33	6/0 20/10	28/30 30/24
Go to the school's meeting for parents	pre post	28/38 42/39	55/48 42/35	11/9 8/13	6/4 8/13
Make suggestions about what my child should do after HS	pre post	37/14 18/43	31/52 54/35	16/10 10/9	16/24 18/13
Go to community organizations to get help for my child	pre post	33/21 60/23	28/16 20/12	17/26 10/6	22/37 10/59
Try to learn about what special rights my child has because of his/her disability	pre post	42/48 75/50	26/26 8/32	16/5 0/4	16/21 17/14
Show my child books and magazines about careers	pre post	28/26 42/27	50/48 58/50	6/5 0/5	16/21 0/18
Try to get my child to tell me about what she/he likes or is good at	pre post	63/65 75/50	37/30 25/36	0/0 0/9	0/5 0/5
Talk to people about the right kind of job for my child	pre post	37/30 25/20	16/20 59/55	26/5 8/5	21/45 8/20

*F = Fall cycle, in percentages

*S = Spring cycle, in percentages

¹Preprogram N=19

²Postprogram N=12

Individual Session Ratings (Both Cycles)

In this section, the reactions of the parents in both the spring and fall cycles to sessions 2, 3, 4, and 5 are examined, and the meetings are described in more detail. The discussion is based on the data which is presented in Table 4, 5, and 6, where the same items which are discussed below are presented. In the tables the items are shown across sessions, here the different items within each session are examined.

Session 2

The theme of this session was "Providing Services to Children with Special Needs: The Role of the School." There were several aims for the session. Parents were provided with information about handicapped children's educational rights and services and made aware of the legal rights of handicapped children. It was also an aim of this session to make parents aware of how children make job choices and the reasons the selections are made, and to provide parents with approaches for securing school services, both general services and those related to career development.

The presenters at this meeting were personnel from Project ROP0, Bilingual Services for Special Education, and also parent advocates. They focused on information about the legal rights of handicapped children, educational services provided by the school, and the parent advocacy role. Those present then divided up into small groups and discussed the results of the previous week's homework assignment, which was a career inventory administered by parents of their children.

Most of the parents voted this session "very worthwhile" and "very interesting," and indicated that they would recommend it to a friend. The majority found that the length of the session was "just about right," and most of the parents rated the speakers as having been "very good."

All of the parents in the fall cycle, and the majority in the spring, found talking to people from high schools, colleges, and other organizations to have been "very useful." They also found the materials they were given to read to be "very useful."

Most of the parents found talking to other parents and meeting in both the larger group and the smaller ones to be "very useful." Most parents also found it "very useful" to be able to ask questions about their child.

Most of the parents said that they "learned a lot" in this session, especially about "what people have to do to have the career they want in the first cycle, and "schooling required for different careers" in the second cycle. When asked what they had liked best about this session, parents spoke about learning about community organizations (especially ROP0), learning that help was available, learning how and where to get help, and "learning from people who know a lot about the problems of raising a disabled child." The parents also mentioned "community communication," "learning that other parents have the same problems I have," "the wealth of ideas that are exchanged," "learning that my son has the opportunity to go to college," and "how we can help our children to have more faith in themselves."

Session 3

The theme of this session was "Resources in the Community for Children with Special Needs." Its aims were to provide parents with information about training resources in the community, to provide parents with an overview of high school special education programs with a focus on career choices and the reasons for the selections.

At this meeting, the presenters were assistant principals of high school special education programs, and representatives of community agencies (FEGS, AHRC, Job Path). The agency and school personnel focused on special education at the high school level and occupational and career training options in community agencies. The parents then divided up into smaller groups and participated in a picture sorting activity designed to spark discussion on what is involved in performing the occupations pictured in the activity.

Most of the parents at this session said they found talking to other parents and people from other places to be "very useful." They were especially enthusiastic about talking to people from other organizations. Comments included many appreciative remarks by the parents about what they learned at this session.

When asked what they thought was best about this session, one parent said that they had been glad to learn about "organizations which offer help to my child." Another mentioned "learning that there are professionals who really care." Other responses spoke of learning about "what schools have to offer,"

"what careers for our child to choose," and "how to help choose career for a child." One person said that they had "met someone who will assist my child with placement." When the parents were asked to name the worst feature of this session, many of them complained that there had not been enough time to talk about the organizations.

Session 4

The theme of this meeting was "Training and Support Service Network: Community Agencies for those with Special Needs." The aims of the session were to make parents aware of community resources available to their children (training, academic, and support services), and to demonstrate how parents can help their children identify values related to career development.

The presenters at this meeting were representatives from UPA, ASPIRA, Puerto Rican Forum, and OVR. They discussed training opportunities for parents and students, support services for Hispanics, and developing advocacy skills. In the small groups there were discussions of the previous week's picture sort homework assignment followed by a "work values" activity.

All of the parents in the fall cycle, and almost all in the spring, rated this meeting as having been "very worthwhile" and felt that it was "just about right" in length. The meeting as a whole was rated as "very interesting" by almost all of the parents, and almost all of them rated the speakers as having been "very good." Many of the parents said they were taking home "a lot" of ideas from this meeting.

Most of the parents found that the people from other organizations were "very useful." Comments about the meeting called the agency representatives the "best thing" about this meeting, and expressed parents' appreciation "to learn of all the organizations for students with a disability." There were many comments which specifically named individuals agencies which they had learned of for the first time. All of the parents in the fall cycle, and most in the spring, felt that asking questions about their child was "very useful" at this meeting.

The small groups were rated "very useful" by all of the parents in the fall cycle and by most in the spring. The previous week's homework was examined in a discussion about how children could relate interests and abilities to things they do or might want to do at school. Most of the parents rated talking with

other parents to have been particularly useful in the fall cycle, while the organizational people were rated higher in the spring.

Session 5

The theme of this meeting was "Labor Market Conditions and Employer Needs: Implications for Hiring Students with Special Needs." The aims were to provide parents with first-hand contact with employers and job placement resources, to identify skills and abilities that employers look for when hiring, and to examine materials and techniques that students could use when looking for a job.

At this meeting there was a panel of resource people who provided information on their own companies or organizations (what it does, where it is located, how many people it employs, its employment outlook, and the services provided). The session then broke up into small groups, and the panelists rotated among the groups. In the small groups, the discussion was about factors that raise employment potentials of handicapped students, occupational information, abilities needed for a job, activities necessary to prepare for a job, and overcoming disability-related obstacles to employment.

This meeting was rated "very worthwhile" and "very interesting by all of the parents in the fall cycle and by most in the spring. All of them also rated the speakers as having been "very good" in the fall, while almost all did so in the spring. Specific speakers were mentioned by parents in their comments as having been the "best thing" about this meeting. Several people mentioned college programs, one spoke of "the information about training by the transit authority and hospital programs," and another liked the OVR speakers best. Talking to people from other organizations was rated high at this session by most of the parents in both the fall, and spring cycles. The small groups were also rated "very useful" by most of the parents.

Most of the parents said that the length of the meeting was "just about right," although again the only complaint about this meeting was that it was "too short." This meeting was evidently especially informative for the parents. One typical comment was "I learned a lot." Another parent said they had learned "that there are many more options available than I realized for my child."

TABLE 4

Parent's General Reactions to the Worth of the Project on a Session-by-Session Basis
(Both Cycles)

ITEMS	SESSIONS							
	2 ¹		3 ²		4 ³		5 ⁴	
Today's session was:								
How worthwhile? ^a	2.92	2.84	2.89	2.79	3.00	2.85	3.00	2.86
How interesting? ^b	2.75	2.81	2.89	2.79	2.90	2.81	3.00	2.96
Generated many ideas? ^c	2.33	2.28	2.61	2.30	2.70	2.40	2.86	2.47
Appropriate in length? ^d	2.92	2.87	2.83	2.87	3.00	2.77	2.93	2.86
Today's speakers were:								
How good? ^e	2.83	2.90	2.89	2.64	2.90	2.89	3.00	2.96

Scales:

^a(1=not very; 2=a little; 3=very worthwhile)

^b(1=not very; 2=a little; 3=very interesting)

^c(1=not very many; 2=a few; 3=a lot)

^d(1=too long; 2=too short; 3=just right)

^e(1=not very; 2=just O.K.; 3=very good)

¹(Session 2) N=12(Fall); N=30(Spring)

²(Session 3) N=18(Fall); N=24(Spring)

³(Session 4) N=10(Fall); N=26(Spring)

⁴(Session 5) N=13(Fall); N=22(Spring)

TABLE 5

Parents Ratings of the Program's Components on a Session-by-Session Basis, by Cycle^a

ITEMS	SESSIONS							
	2 ¹		3 ²		4 ³		5 ⁴	
Talking to people from high schools and colleges:	3.00	2.60	2.72	2.47	2.40	2.67	2.58	2.80
Talking to people from other organizations:	3.00	2.68	2.94	2.64	2.70	2.81	2.86	2.81
Talking with other parents:	2.92	2.79	2.61	2.76	2.90	2.36	2.64	2.53
Reading materials:	3.00	2.62	2.72	2.60	2.60	2.67	2.93	2.69
Meeting in a large group:	2.92	2.43	2.33	2.35	2.70	2.52	2.57	2.43
Meeting in a small group:	2.92	2.81	2.56	2.79	3.00	2.64	2.93	2.82
Asking questions about my child:	2.92	2.68	2.78	2.71	3.00	2.73	2.86	2.71

^aScale, How useful was the meeting? 1= not very; 2= a little; 3= very useful.¹(Session 2) N=12(Fall); N=30(Spring)²(Session 3) N=18(Fall); N=24(Spring)³(Session 4) N=10(Fall); N=26(Spring)⁴(Session 5) N=13(Fall); N=22(Spring)

TABLE 6

Parents' Ratings of How Much They Learned in Select Areas on a Session-by-Session Basis,
Cycle^a

ITEMS	SESSIONS							
	2 ¹		3 ²		4 ³		5 ⁴	
What the schools should do for students with a disability:	2.42	2.21	2.44	2.14	2.70	2.50	2.93	2.33
What other organizations do for students with a disability:	2.50	2.12	2.61	2.22	2.10	2.67	2.86	2.86
Where I can get help with my child's problem:	2.75	2.43	2.78	2.33	2.50	2.42	2.79	2.76
Things I can do at home to help my child choose a career:	2.67	2.32	2.50	2.68	2.40	2.48	2.86	2.31
How to work with other parents:	2.58	2.17	2.22	2.36	2.80	2.21	2.36	2.31
How to work with the school:	2.42	2.32	2.39	2.44	2.50	2.33	2.50	2.19
How to work with other organizations:	2.67	2.13	2.67	2.31	2.70	2.57	2.50	2.42
How many kinds of jobs available:	2.42	1.61	2.44	2.35	2.40	2.43	2.64	2.67
What people have to do to have the career they want:	2.63	2.00	2.28	2.39	2.80	2.21	2.50	2.50
Schooling required for different careers:	2.75	2.82	2.61	2.13	2.30	2.21	2.79	2.42
Things about careers to tell child:	2.50	1.82	2.68	2.53	2.30	2.45	2.64	2.44
What business looks for in workers:	2.42	1.61	2.39	2.25	2.40	2.39	2.57	2.38
How to help my child learn about his/her interests and abilities	2.67	2.13	2.61	2.61	2.80	2.47	2.79	2.29

^aScale: 1 = did not learn much; 2 = learned a little; 3 = learned a lot.

¹(Session 2) N=12(Fall); N=30(Spring)

²(Session 3) N=18(Fall); N=24(Spring)

³(Session 4) N=10(Fall); N=26(Spring)

⁴(Session 5) N=30(Fall); N=22(Spring)

Co-Trainer Pre-Survey

All of the co-trainers (N=7) were asked to fill out a questionnaire at the start of the program. They answered questions about their experience with the different aspects of the program (experience with special education, with an Hispanic population, and with career education).

The questionnaire revealed that most of the co-trainers were teachers, and their average job experience was about 8 years. All had had experience with special education students and with an Hispanic population. Most had had experience with career education also.

Most of the co-trainers said that they were comfortable with the idea of parents as career educators, although a few did express reservations. Most also felt comfortable anticipating working with the parents, working in small and large groups, working one-to-one, and with the content knowledge. Most felt optimistic that they would be able to adapt their experiences to the needs of the project.

Co-trainer Post Survey and Post Project Survey

This program had benefits for the co-trainers as well as for the parents. The co-trainers were given questionnaires at the end of the project and some also took part in a post project survey. Comments reflected the view that they found it "informative" and "interesting."

Several of the co-trainers felt that they had improved their skills in leading small groups because of their participation in the project. One said she "learned how to ask open questions." Another said that she had gained confidence and a good feeling about herself. One co-trainer commented on how comfortable he had been, which he said was "due to the organized, well worked out plan presented by the project director." This was typical of several comments mentioning what one co-trainer called "very well planned parent sessions with step-by-step procedures and good questioning techniques." The co-trainers responded favorably to the preparatory meetings, saying that the major strength of the program was "review of what will be coming up at next meeting," "leading us through the exercises where we did the activities ourselves," and "time to discuss and have questions answered."

Other co-trainers felt that the major strength of the program was to be found in its resources. One of them wrote of "the bringing in of outside resources and agencies to speak to people," another of "good activities for parents to participate in," and a third of speakers, career education training, and small group interaction" as the major strengths of this program. Another co-trainer added "I felt good about the other co-trainers and their interest in the students."

All of the co-trainers said that they had already, or would soon, use the career education exercises or activities which they learned in the program. One co-trainer said she was going to use the program "(1) with my own child, (2) with other parents either individually or in groups, (3) with my students," and also (4) with other teachers so that they "may use them with their students or their parents."

The co-trainers noted effects of the program on the parents. All of them said that the parents were visiting school more often now, involved with the PTA, meeting with school personnel, etc. Several of the parents were directly affected by the program. One made plans to take a course as a nurse's assistant, another as a secretary, and one for a high school equivalency diploma. One parent got a job.

Several of the co-trainers described as a strength of the program the "clearly outlined procedures" and "organized materials." Also mentioned as major strengths were the group discussions, the role playing activities, and "feedback from sessions."

In a follow-up survey, co-trainers were asked what types of assistance were most frequently requested by parents. They mentioned "dealing with special education supervisors" and with other school personnel, "where they could find training," and "what schools are supposed to be doing." They felt that the parents needed the most help in "becoming aware of community resources."

PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

External Evaluation

1982-1983

The external evaluation was conducted by the writer at the request of the project staff. In a preliminary conference with the project staff, it was agreed that the major questions to be addressed should be:

- a. How effective was the project this year, both in terms of process and outcomes?
- b. What measures could be instituted in order to extend the benefits of this project to a larger audience?

The evaluation activities consisted of the following:

1. Two conferences with the project staff, one before any observations or interviews were initiated, and the second after all observations and interviews were completed.
2. Examination of the project proposal, the "agendas" for all sessions during both the fall and spring cycles and the statistical tabulations of data collected as part of the internal evaluation conducted by project staff for both cycles.
3. Attendance at the fifth and sixth sessions of the spring cycle.
4. Interviews with all co-trainers of the spring cycle.
5. Interviews with a number of parents who participated in the spring cycle.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAM

The present evaluator finds that all of this year's materials and data have essentially the same characteristics and qualities as those from the previous year. Because the external evaluation report of that previous year represents a full detailing of the project's goals, activities, and outcomes that seem to apply equally well to the present year, no attempt is made here to report all those details.

In general, the project in its second year reflects all the good qualities of the first year: excellent planning; a well selected staff; the use of solid career development theory as a foundation for the workshops; collection and distribution of materials that were valuable to both the co-trainers and the parents; and the full commitment of staff and resources to make the parent meetings impactful and productive.

Specifically, the staff approached the selection of the target high schools and the specific parents to be invited through a process that assumed a maximum of support--by starting with the top people in the the Board of Education in both secondary school administration and special education and then working down the line to receive support at the borough level and then the individual schools.

The involvement of school and agency staff as co-trainers was another important strategic component. Not only was their expertise thus available, but they also received training in group methods and in career development that will enable them to extend the parent training to future groups.

The parents received training and materials, plus full staff support, that indeed qualified them to be career educators for their children. They were taught how to use several occupational exploration activities that focused on work interests and goals. In each instance they first had a hands-on experience with the activity, then they were given detailed instructions for administering these exercises to their children, and then in the next workshop session time was set aside for them to discuss and exchange experiences regarding what they had learned about their children. The result of all this activity is reflected in the comments of many parents, comments that indicated an enhanced sense of coping strength in helping their children take their next steps and a greatly increased awareness of the world

of work and preparation for work.

Finally, the workshop sessions made use of a well-selected diversity of methods: presentations by guest speakers in general sessions; more interactive meetings with resource people in small groups, and small training groups for hands-on experiences.

All in all, this was once again an effective project that had clearly valuable outcomes for all its participants--both parents and co-trainers.

WHAT DID THE PARENTS GET OUT OF IT?

The 8 parents who were interviewed formally and the 30-plus parents who were observed and heard during the last two workshop meetings expressed many positive opinions regarding the training program. Their previous knowledge and experiences ranged widely, as reflected in the following sample of their comments during interviews:

"I've been so active as a parent C.O.H. member, but I didn't learn much there except about the assessment materials. I came here to see what is available, and now I can be much more realistic about the special education child. This should be extended down to the junior high school."

"Now I know he (my son) has someplace to go -- OVR, a job. Before I didn't know what was what. The workshops were just fantastic -- well-rounded, covered all the areas. And I know how to do things with my child step-by step. Even though he's still fantasizing about becoming a basketball player, now he is helping with the gardening at home and maybe he'll be able to get a job like that. This is what came from my exploring his interests with him."

"The people from colleges were very helpful. I didn't know that children with learning disabilities could take college courses."

"There are more agencies than I knew. There is help."

"I learned how to discuss jobs with my child, and allied fields."

"It's a load off of my mind! We thought we were totally lost...no hope... that we'd have to take care of them for the rest of their life. But we found out

there are people interested in them...will help them...how many things they can do."

"Last week's session was very valuable, with Goodwill Industries and others. They train them, don't rush them."

"At one session another parent mentioned a special kind of obesity condition. As a result we took our daughter to Elmhurst Hospital and for the first time found that she has a specific syndrome. Now we know what we have to do; even though there isn't much hope, at least we know what the condition is, and that made the whole program worth it for me."

"I'm the representative of the special education parents to the PTA Executive Board. But now I'm more verbal about what should be done for my children."

"My child is in a resource room. More teachers in the school should be made sensitive to the needs of special education children."

"I asked him (my son) a lot of questions he never thought of before--how he'll find a job, what he's going to be."

"The most valuable part was about colleges and OVR--that all things emanate from OVR. We know our way around now."

"I went back to OVR and got them to send my child to a rehabilitation center."

"I learned how to speak up to C.O.H and at a PA meeting."

"I learned about a diagnostic center."

"I learned how to get what my child is entitled to."

Indeed the parents gave evidence that they had become career educators for their children. They knew better what to ask, how to guide their children, what is available and how to reach out for it. Even though they remained realistic about the difficult paths that lay ahead of them and their children, they were much more certain about what could and could not be done. Based on this evaluator's experience these parents now know more about career development, and opportunities and services, than most teachers--special or regular education.

HOW DID THE CO-TRAINERS VIEW THE PROGRAM?

The rationale for involving special educators and agency personnel as co-trainers was, first, to bring their expertise to the training program, and, second, to increase their own knowledge and skill so that they could extend this kind of training in their respective schools and agencies to additional parents in the future - a kind of multiplier effect. The following comments were made by co-trainers in interviews with this evaluator:

"These parents have had access to ideas I didn't know about after 18 years of teaching."

"Parents have learned of agencies they never heard of, such as F.E.G.S."

"I'm thinking of putting together a resource booklet, on stencil, to reach our 105 parents. All I'd need is a small grant for duplication and postage."

"We need more vocational training in the school."

"We should have more sessions. There's not enough time to go over the 'homework' with the parents."

"There is good feeling among the parents; they seem to feel comfortable, free to speak their minds."

"We need a special Parent Association for special ed. parents."

From comments such as those above, and from observations of the workshops and conversations with the project staff, there is reason to conclude that these co-trainers really had a feeling of involvement in something very worthwhile. The social distance between them and parents was decreased, and they had a new respect for the concerns and ideas of the parents.

The involvement of the co-trainers is even more impressive when one considers how little support they have in their own schools as teachers when reaching out to parents (a telephone, a secretary, for example) and how difficult it is to reach many of these parents in the urban setting. Two of last year's co-trainers

are running parent groups on their own, and there is reason to believe that some of this year's co-trainers will continue on their own to use the information and skills they acquired during the workshops. These effects alone justify the entire project.

NEXT STEPS IN EXTENDING THE TRAINING OF PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS.

Obviously this project, over a period of two years, has merely scratched the surface of the need for strengthening parents in this role of career educator for their children. For one thing, only 21 high schools participated during the two years; they comprise about one-fifth of the high schools in New York City. Even within those 21 schools, only a small fraction of special education parents were involved--perhaps they represent five percent of all the special education students in those schools.

One problem is transportation; most of these parents do not drive, and public transportation for many requires a subway and bus or two buses, sometimes in unsafe neighborhoods. Further, many of the parents work, and many have younger children at home. With all of this, it was difficult to find a time and place where parents from six different high schools in a borough could assemble at one time and make a commitment to attend a series of six workshops. Only the efforts of the co-trainers from the schools -- telephone calls (in many instances made from the school's main office) and notes to parents -- brought out the parents who did attend.

One solution is to make it possible for parents to receive this kind of training in their schools and neighborhoods. Although that would not give parents and co-trainers the opportunity to exchange knowledge with people from other schools, it would reduce by quite a bit the travel problem. The following section deals with

some of the ways in which this extension could be arranged.

Packaging the Program

It should be possible to prepare materials, and instructions for their use, that would enable special educators to replicate the kind of parent training that was conducted in this project. A manual could be prepared --ideally by the CUNY staff of this project -- that would include the necessary components. Along with the manual it would be essential that there be training of the trainers in using the manual. Ideally this would be done by the CUNY team in face-to-face training sessions or workshops. However, a second-best method of communicating content and processs would be a videotape in which the CUNY staff would illustrate as much as possible of the events comprising a face-to-face workshop, including modeling group leadership behavior, and demonstrations of the actual conduct of large-group and small-group activities.

The manual itself would include specific content about career development, the world of work, typical agency services available to special education students, typical resources in schools, colleges and agencies, definitions of IEPs, COHs, and the various procedures involved in assessment and placement of special education students, a summary of pertinent legal aspects, and other information of the type that has been transmitted in written and oral form during the six-session workshop series in this project.

The manual would also contain a section describing instructional and group processes as used in these workshops. Few teachers have much of the understanding or skill needed to use small groups in an informed manner to focus on personal matters that include perceptions, feelings, attitudes, values, and opinions.

The manual would explain in detail each of the experimental activities used in

this project -- the Career Inventory, The Picture Sort, and the Values Exercise, as well as suggesting others that might be used and listing references for further information. Samples of completed forms would be included, and examples of the kinds of questions-and-answer interchanges that trainers and parents could engage in when reviewing a form that has been filled out by a parent or child.

Session-by-session outlines would be offered -- in effect an elaboration of the "agendas" with full explanations of how to prepare for each session, what materials to have ready, and suggestions of the types of speakers and resource people one could invite to each session.

Finally, the manual would contain specific suggestions for evaluating each session and the entire series. Evaluation forms and their use would be illustrated and explained.

With this kind of manual and either an accompanying videotape (or film) or an actual series of training sessions for the trainers, it should be possible for every school to offer parent training of this kind. To be successful, enterprise in any given school should have the full endorsement and support of the principal, the special education faculty, the PTA, and pertinent agencies. Furthermore, the school's vocational education department and guidance office contain resources that could be invaluable to this parent education program.

It is strongly recommended that an effort be made to obtain funding for the development and dissemination of just such package. The CUNY project staff possesses at this point eight years of experience in research and development regarding the career development and counseling of handicapped students and is in an ideal position to make this contribution now that it has completed two years of parent education experience in this area.

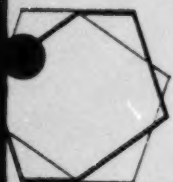
The effects of this parent education work will of course vary considerably among schools, depending in part on the enthusiasm, skill, and commitment of the staff and the response of the particular parents who participate. But if once in a while there is a parent who becomes a major force in the school, the entire project can perhaps be considered worthwhile. Such a one is the "star" of the first year's project -- a mother who, following her participation last year in the project, approached her high school PTA to suggest more concern for the school's special education program and in the present year not only was elected President of the PTA but went on to organize a PTA at the parochial school that her other children attend. Here was a potential leader who blossomed as a result of the knowledge and skills she derived from this project. This one outcome may be enough to justify an entire year's program, but it is only the most note a worthy of a number of "success stories."

Leo Goldman, Ph.D.

June 1983

APPENDICES

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Center for Advanced Study in Education
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Graduate Center: 33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
212 221-3895/96

PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Workshop #1

(WORKING AGENDA)

Tuesday, March 22, 1983

THEME: CAREER INVENTORY: Identifying Expressed Vocational Aspirations.

AIMS: To identify parents concerns and problems regarding their children's occupational future.

To make parents aware of the factors involved in making career choices.

To demonstrate skills the parents can use with their children in developing career goals.

OUTCOMES: Parents will know how to use the career inventory for their children.

Parents will be able to identify concerns and problems regarding their children's occupational future.

Activities

Preliminaries

3:00 - 3:30

Parents sign the attendance sheet.

Co-trainer gives each parent an envelope with the stipend.

Parents have refreshments.

Large Group

3:30 - 3:40

Project staff introduce co-trainers.

Overview of the program.

Small Groups

3:45 - 4:00

Warm-up, parents meet in dyads and then introduce their partner to other group members.

4:00 - 4:45

Career Inventory

Co-trainers will explain the purpose of the career inventory as a way of identifying occupational interests.

Parents will go through the process of completing their own inventory. Co-trainers will give explanations and help parents explore implications of their answers.

Co-trainers will distribute inventories and explain how parents are to use the inventory as an at-home assignment with their children and give some general directions on how best to do this.

4:45 - 5:05

Small Group Evaluation

- o Parents evaluate the session.
(See questions on "Instructions for small group activities")
- o Co-trainers hand out pre-evaluation form and explain how to fill it out at home. (Emphasize purpose of evaluation: to improve program and that it is not a test)
- (Parents are to return form at next meeting.)

Large Group

5:10 - 5:25

Special Education students

A panel of special education students who are working will:

- o describe their job
- o tell how they obtained the job
- o identify those who helped
- o describe work plan for the future

5:25 - 5:30

Recap of the session.
Reminder of date for next session.

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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Meeting #1

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:

STEP I Interview of parents in dyads. (5 minutes)

Set of questions that parents can use during the five-minute interview:

1. What is your name?
2. Are you working or have you worked?
3. What kind of work do you or did you do?
4. What is your child's name?
5. How old is your child?
6. What's school is he/she going to?
7. What would you like to get out of these meetings?

STEP II Parents will introduce each other to the group using the information from the interview. (15 minutes)

STEP III CAREER INVENTORY

Purpose:

- . To help your child to start thinking about work after high school.
- . To help your child to be ready for a job.
- . To help your child develop a clear idea of:
 - . what work is all about
 - . what kind of work he/she is interested in
 - . what training he/she needs for his/her job choice
 - . how to overcome problems in getting a job or going into a training program.

STEP IV Brief oral evaluation

Question to be asked during evaluation (end of small session)

- . What new things did you learn?
- . How can you use this new information to help your child?
- Is there anything new that you would like to add?
- . Is there anything you would like to continue with?
- . Is there anything that you did not like?

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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Meeting #2—April 12, 1983

WORKING AGENDA

THEME: PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: THE
ROLE OF THE SCHOOL.

AIMS: To provide parents with information about handicapped
children's educational rights and services.

To make parents aware of the legal rights of handicapped
children.

To make parents aware of how their children make job
choices and the reasons for making the selections.
Debriefing & critiquing how parents used career in-
ventory with their children.

To provide parents with approaches for securing school
services, both general, and those related to career
development.

OUTCOMES: Parents will be able to identify several services the
school is providing for handicapped children (e.g., In-
dividual Educational Program (IEP); Committee on the
Handicapped (COH); School Based Support Team (SBST);
Bilingual assistance.

Parents will know the steps needed to request general
and career related services for their children.

ACTIVITIES

Preliminary Activity
2:30 - 3:00
Library

Parents sign attendance
sheet and receive stipend

Refreshments

Co-trainers encourage parents
to talk to resource people in-
formally.

Resource people: parents who
participated in program last
year; Project ROPO staff; staff
members from Office of Bilingual
Services, Office of Special
Education.

Meeting #2--April 12, 1983

Large Group

3:00 - 3:30

Introduction of Presenters:
Project ROPO personnel
Bilingual Services for
Special Ed. personnel
Parent advocates

Presenters will focus on:

- information about legal rights of handicapped children
- educational services provided by the school
- parent advocacy role

Questions and Answers

Small Groups

3:35 - 4:25

Co-trainers debrief results of parent/child homework assignment on career interest inventory

Co-trainers will follow the steps in the inventory

(To elicit a more mature understanding of inventory, co-trainers will use questions on the attached debriefing guide)

4:25 - 4:40

Oral evaluation of session

Distribute and explain take-home evaluation of session (to be returned at next meeting)

Reassemble in large group

4:45 - 5:00

Closing remarks
"Give Testimony"

PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Meeting #2--April 12, 1983

Co-trainers guide for Career Inventory Debriefing:

Set of questions to use during the debriefing:

Career Choices:

- Tell us what happened during the interview?
- When and where did the interview take place?
- What jobs did your child select?
- How did he/she make the selection?
- How do you feel about the job selection?
- Was it a realistic choice?
- What do you think your child should do next?
- How can your child get more information?
- (Co-trainer questions).

Roadblocks:

For question #1.

- How did your child answer?
- Did you offer any suggestions? What did you say?
- At the next time, would you say it differently? How?

For question #2.

- What was your reaction to your child's answer? Why?

For question #3.

- Do you agree or disagree with your child's answer? Why?
- Where would you go for more information?

For question #4.

- What would you advise your child to do if money was a problem?

General Questions:

- Do you feel that your child is on the right track in getting ready for a career? Why?
- What do you feel you need to help your child prepare for a career?
- How can you work with the school to help your child?
- Who are the people who can help you and your child?
- How will you go about taking the next step?



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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Meeting #3—April 26, 1983

WORKING AGENDA

- THEME:** RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
- AIMS:** To provide parents with an overview of high school special education programs with a focus on career related training options.
- To provide parents with up-to-date diploma requirements.
- To make parents aware of how their children make career choices and the reasons for making selections.
- OUTCOMES:** Parents will be able to identify school programs that provide training and support services for handicapped students.
- Parents will be able to identify their own interests and abilities related to career choices.
- Parents will be able to use a modified vocational card sort activity as a means of helping their children identify further career interests and abilities.
- Parents will know latest standards for receiving a high school diploma.

ACTIVITIES

Preliminary Activity
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Parents sign attendance sheet and receive stipend.

Refreshments

Parents talk to resource people informally.

Resource people: Assistant to Principals and Supervisors of high school special education programs.

Large Group
3:30 - 4:15 p.m.

Presentation by resource people.

High school supervisors will focus on:

- overview of special education at the high school level
- occupational and career related options
- diploma requirements

Small Groups
4:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Picture Sort Activity

- Each parent will be given a set of 20 pictures with job titles (English/Spanish).
- Parents will be asked to look over all pictures and separate them into two groups—one group will consist of jobs that are of interest to them, the others will be those that don't interest them.
- Then parents will be asked to select two jobs from their interest group that appeal to them most of all.
- For these two jobs, parents will discuss what is involved in doing the job, why these jobs interest them, and the skills and abilities needed.

5:00 - 5:15 p.m.

Homework Preparation

- Parents will be instructed on how to use these cards with their children and to report at the next session on how their children responded.
- Oral and written evaluation of the session.

Large Group
5:15 - 5:30 p.m.

Questions and Answers

"Give Testimony" Announcements

PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Co-Trainer Guide for Picture Sort

1. Give general overview of the activity using the "Career Inventory" as a guide; e.g., columns 2 and 3 - 1) reasons for choice and 2) what do people do on the job?
2. How parents do the picture sort. Co-trainers are to encourage interaction among the parents. See working agenda for steps.
3. Guide parents in comparing their choices in the career inventory with those made in the picture sort.

How are they the same?

How are they different?

What are you beginning to learn about your interests?

What skills and abilities are needed?

How would you go about finding out more information?

4. Preparation for homework.

To help parents do the exercise at home with their children:

- have parents form dyads.
- have parents assume the role of a child, the role of the parent. Parents will practice each role for 5 minutes.
- co-trainer will move around to observe interaction.
- after ten minutes, have the group talk about the experience. Encourage parents to make suggestions on how they will do it at home.

Additional homework activity:

- Parents can ask their children to talk about things they do or might want to do at school that relate to the interests and abilities associated with their career choices.

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Parents as Career Educators

Meeting #4--May 10, 1983

WORKING AGENDA

- THEME:** Training and Support Service Network: Community Agencies for those with special needs.
- AIMS:** To make parents aware of community resources available to their children: training academic and support services.
- To demonstrate how parents can help their children identify values related to career development.
- OUTCOMES:** Parents will be able to identify and learn how to use community resources.
- Parents will be able to assess their own values related to careers.
- Parents will be able to help their children identify some career related values.

ACTIVITIES

Preliminary Activity
3:15 - 3:35

Parents sign attendance sheet and receive stipend.

Library

Refreshments

Co-trainers encourage parents to talk to resource people informally.

Resource people: representatives from ANIBIC, OVR, MOH, ICD, FECS

Large Group
3:35 - 4:25

Resource people presentations

Meeting #4 -- May 10, 1983

Small Groups

4:30 - 4:50

4:50 - 5:15

Large Group

5:20 - 5:30

Presenters will focus on:

- o Training opportunities for Community parents/students
- o Support services for adolescents.
- o Developing advocacy skills.

Collect evaluations of previous workshop.

Debrief picture sort homework assignment. (Elicit how children related interests/abilities to things they do or might want to do at school).

Value Exercise

- o Follow steps in co-trainer guide for Values Exercise. (see attached)
- o Parents are to relate responses to their job choice on the career inventory in Session #1.
- o Parents are to describe how they are going to do the exercise with their children. (Parents may want to compare their responses with those of their children).

Oral and written evaluation of the session.

"Give testimony"

Questions and Answers.



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Meeting Number #4

VALUES EXERCISE

Most people who work would like to have a steady job and earn enough money to make a living. In addition, people want other satisfactions on a job. These will differ among people.

To discover the things that you would like on a job, check those items on the following list that are most important to you. There are no right or wrong answers.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. ___ little danger in doing my job | 16. ___ make decisions. |
| 2. ___ high risk in doing my job. | 17. ___ hire and fire people. |
| 3. ___ not too many worries | 18. ___ plan my own hours. |
| 4. ___ have hard problems to solve. | 19. ___ be my own boss. |
| 5. ___ work with friendly people. | 20. ___ be able to move up. |
| 6. ___ work in privacy | 21. ___ organize work in my own way. |
| 7. ___ have a boss who likes me. | 22. ___ involves hard physical work. |
| 8. ___ teach others. | 23. ___ have little or no supervision. |
| 9. ___ help others with their problems. | 24. ___ set my own time to finish a job |
| 10. ___ give directions to others. | 25. ___ work with people I can trust. |
| 11. ___ receive exact directions. | 26. ___ have little or no pressure. |
| 12. ___ help people feel better. | 27. ___ work in a quiet atmosphere. |
| 13. ___ work with different kinds of people. | 28. ___ be able to tell the boss when I need help. |
| 14. ___ tell other workers what to do. | 29. ___ travel out of town. |
| 15. ___ be in charge of a job. | 30. ___ visit different offices. |

31. _____ learn new things all the time.
32. _____ keep my hands clean.
33. _____ work in an office.
34. _____ work in a factory.
35. _____ make more money even if job is less secure.
36. _____ a very secure job even if it means less money.
37. _____ job does not interfere with family life.
38. _____ have a boss I respect.



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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

**MEETING #5--MAY 24, 1983
Working Agenda**

**THEME: LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS AND EMPLOYER NEEDS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR HIRING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL
NEEDS**

- AIMS:**
- To provide parents with first-hand contact with employers and job placement resources.
 - To identify skills and abilities that employers look for when hiring.
 - To examine materials and techniques that students can use in their job search activity.

- OUTCOMES:**
- Parents will be aware of labor market conditions in the community and community hiring practices.
 - Parents will be able to identify special employers and/or placement services that respond to employment needs of handicapped students.
 - Parents will be aware of materials that can be use by handicapped students in job hunting:

ACTIVITIES

Preliminary Activity
3:00 - 3:25

Attendance/Payment
Refreshments

Large Group:
3:30 - 3:40

Introduction of Resource
People

Small Groups:
3:15 - 5:15
(panelists will rotate
every 1/2 hour)

Brief introduction of
panelists:

Panelists will give
overview:

- What company/organization does
- Where it is located
- How many people employed
- Employment outlook
- Services provided

Panelists will focus on
on factors that raise
the employment potential
of handicapped students

MEETING #5--May 24, 1983

Parents and co-trainers will have sets of questions that elicit information from panelists.

5:15 - 5:25

After panelists' presentation in the small groups, co-trainers will continue with a short verbal evaluation.

- what new things did parents learn?
- how can parents use new information to help their children?
- what additional information and help would they like to have?
- End of session written evaluation
- Questions and Answers
- "Give Testimony"

Large Groups
5:30 - 5:40



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Meeting #5

FOR PARENTS AND CO-TRAINERS

Set of questions to ask panelists,
Employers and Agency People

General work:

- . What kinds of jobs are there for beginners?
- . Can you describe some of the jobs?
- . How much money do you pay a new worker?
- . Can you describe the place of work?
- . What does a person with a handicap, interested in working in your company, need to do to apply for a job?

Things I like and can do:

- . What things does my child have to be able to do to work in your company.?
- . Does your company train new workers?
- . What things do companies look for when hiring new people?

Preparing and planning for a job

- . If my child is interested in a job, how can he/she prepare for it?
- . What subjects should my child take in school?
- . What type of help can I get from your organization?
- . Do I have to pay for the training in your organization?
- . What kind of training outside of school can help my child?
- . How can my child apply for a job in your company?
- . Who is the person that my child has to call or write?..

When things get in the way:

- . My child has (describe handicap):
Can he/she still be hired?
- . How can I help my child be ready for a job?
- . If my child does not get a diploma, can my child still get a job in your company?
- . Has your company made changes on the job for persons with handicaps?
- . Will your company make changes on the job for people with handicaps?
- . What companies have made changes on the job for persons with handicaps?

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

Meeting Number 6

CUNY STAFF

Toni Deutch
Bert Flugman
David Katz
Maureen Lynch

TRAINING PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS

Parents Award Ceremony

CO-TRAINERS

Roberta Arrigo	Hunter College
Audrey Badin	Flushing High School
Thelma Bauer	John Bowne High School
Angela Berni	Forest Hills High School
Ellen Gordon	Francis Lewis High School
Joel Simon	Jamaica High School
Marian Villalva	Bryant High School

Flushing High School
35-01 Union Street
Flushing, New York 11354

Library

Tuesday - May 31, 1983

3:30 - 5:30

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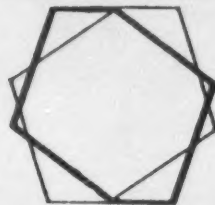
STUDENT AIDS

Monsey Barrera
Brenda Langford
Leslie McKinley

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Parents as Career Educators

PROJECT STAFF

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LISTING OF AGENCIES, COMPANIES, AND COLLEGES THAT SENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE WORKSHOPS FOR "PARENTS AS CAREER
EDUCATORS"

LISTA DE AGENCIAS, COMPANIAS, Y COLLEGIOS QUE TUVIERON
REPRESENTANTES EN LAS SESIONES DE "PADRES COMO EDUCADORES"

(1)

New York City Board of Education

New York City Board of Education

- (1) Project ROPO (Reach Out to Parents)
110 Livingston Street, Rm. 237M
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202
Contact Person : Rosemary Gonzalez 596-4193
- (2) Placement And Referral Center
for the Handicapped
100 Attorney Street, Rm. 314
Contact Person: Ollie Fields 505-6390

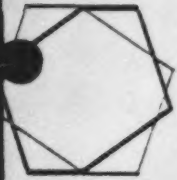
Colleges and Community Agencies

- (1) Queensborough Community College
56th Avenue and Springfield Blvd.
Bayside, New York
Contact Person: Elliot Rosman 631-6257
- (2) Job Path
22 West 38th Street
New York, N.Y. 10018
Contact Person: Jorge Poratto 944-0564

- (3) Para-Education Center for Young Adults
New York University
One Washington Place
New York, N.Y. 10003
Contact Person: Judith Kiones 598-3906
- (4) Mayor's Office for the Handicapped
250 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10007
Contact Person: Patricia Karlsen 566-0972
- (5) Federation Employment And Guidance Service
(FEGS)
510 Sixth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10011
Contact Person: Andrea Kaye 741-7123
- (6) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
136-50 39th Avenue
Flushing, New York
Contact Person: Carol Stein 359-5858
- (7) International Center for the Disabled (ICD)
340 East 34th Street
New York, N.Y. 10010
Contact Person: Leroy Jones 679-0100
- (8) Youth Opportunity Center
45 West 36th Street
New York, N.Y. 10018
Contact Person: Sam Vargas 868-2850 x 4
- (9) Goodwill Industries
4-21 27th Avenue
Astoria, New York
Contact Person: Charlotte Shephard
- (10) Family Life Theater
Metropolitan Hospital Center
1901 First Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10028
Contact Person: Ed Goldman 360-7291

Employees

- (1) City Hospital Center At Elmhurst
79-01 Broadway
Elmhurst, New York
Contact Person: Eileen Hinricks 830-1271
- (2) New York City Transit Authority
605 West 132nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10027
Contact Person: Nat White 690-9430
- (3) Port Authority of N.Y. - N.J.
One World Trade Center, 61 South
New York, N.Y. 10048
Contact Person: Roscoe Wisner 466-7000



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LISTING OF AGENCIES, COMPANIES, AND COLLEGES THAT SENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE WORKSHOPS FOR "PARENTS AS CAREER
EDUCATORS"

LISTA DE AGENCIAS, COMPANIAS, Y COLLEGIOS QUE TUVIERON
REPRESENTANTES EN LAS SESIONES DE "PADRES COMO EDUCADORES"

(1)

New York City Board of Education

New York City Board of Education

(1) Project ROPO (Reach Out to Parents)
110 Livingston Street, Rm. 237M
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202
Contact Person : Rosemary Gonzalez 596-4193

(2) Placement And Referral Center
for the Handicapped
100 Attorney Street, Rm. 314
Contact Person: Ollie Fields 505-6390

Colleges and Community Agencies

(1) Queensborough Community College
56th Avenue and Springfield Blvd.
Bayside, New York
Contact Person: Elliot Rosman 631-6257

(2) Job Path
22 West 38th Street
New York, N.Y. 10018
Contact Person: Jorge Poratto 944-0564

- (3) Para-Education Center for Young Adults
New York University
One Washington Place
New York, N.Y. 10003
Contact Person: Judith Kiones 598-3906
- (4) Mayor's Office for the Handicapped
250 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10007
Contact Person: Patricia Karlsen 566-0972
- (5) Federation Employment And Guidance Service (FEGS)
510 Sixth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10011
Contact Person: Andrea Kaye 741-7123
- (6) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
136-50 39th Avenue
Flushing, New York
Contact Person: Carol Stein 359-5858
- (7) International Center for the Disabled (ICD)
340 East 34th Street
New York, N.Y. 10010
Contact Person: Leroy Jones 679-0100
- (8) Youth Opportunity Center
45 West 36th Street
New York, N.Y. 10018
Contact Person: Sam Vargas 868-2850 x 4
- (9) Goodwill Industries
4-21 27th Avenue
Astoria, New York
Contact Person: Charlotte Shephard
- (10) Family Life Theater
Metropolitan Hospital Center
1901 First Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10028
Contact Person: Ed Goldman 360-7291

Employers

- (1) City Hospital Center At Elmhurst
79-01 Broadway
Elmhurst, New York
Contact Person: Eileen Hinricks 830-1271
- (2) New York City Transit Authority
605 West 132nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10027
Contact Person: Nat White 690-9430
- (3) Port Authority of N.Y. - N.J.
One World Trade Center, 61 South
New York, N.Y. 10048
Contact Person: Roscoe Wisner 466-7000

CASE/Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education
 Graduate School and University Center
 City University of New York

(M)X

PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS
Co-Trainer Survey

To assess how well this program is meeting its goals, we need to systematically collect some information now, and at the end, about you and the agency (school/organization) you represent. We would appreciate it if you would fill out this Survey as completely as possible and mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope by the end of the week.

Please try to be specific and detailed; you may wish to write on the backs of pages, or on other paper if you need more space. Be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially and used only to assess program effectiveness. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Name: _____ School or
 2. organization: _____
3. Your job title: _____
4. Including this year, for how many years have you held your present job with this organization? _____
5. Please rank the following types of services in terms of your organization's orientation. Use a "1" to denote the service that is the primary focus, a "2" for the service next highest in priority, and so on.
- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| _____ education | _____ other direct service (non-educational) |
| _____ advocacy | _____ other; please describe: _____ |
| _____ referral | _____ |

The following set of questions is about your personal experiences with the populations to which the Parents as Career Educators is addressed.

6. Have you had any experience in working with special education students of high school-age? ____No ____Yes; if yes, please describe and also indicate any other relevant experience that you may have had with handicapped youth of any age group:
7. Have you had any experience in working with Hispanic students of high school-age? ____No ____Yes; if yes, please describe and also indicate any other relevant experience that you may have had with Hispanic youth of any age group:
8. Have you had any experience in providing career education? ____No ____Yes; if yes, please describe:

- Please explain your response:

- that you can adapt your experiences to a Hispanic population?

____ very uncomfortable

____ somewhat comfortable

____ somewhat uncomfortable

____ very comfortable

Please explain your response: _____

- that you can adapt your experiences to a population that is both handicapped and of limited English language skills?

____ very uncomfortable

____ somewhat comfortable

____ somewhat uncomfortable

____ very comfortable

Please explain your response: _____

The final set of questions deals with some of the activity your organization is involved in at the present time.

11. Currently, to the best of your knowledge, what (if any) career/vocational activities for special education students is your organization involved in at the present time? (Consider these activities as examples of a range of possible services: vocational assessment, interest inventories, occupational information, career counseling, orientation meetings, college and schooling information, etc.)
12. To the best of you knowledge, what career/vocational activities for Hispanic students is your organization involved in at the present time?
13. Currently, what career education activities (including, in addition to direct services, referrals, and meetings) is your organization engaged in:
 - for general parent groups?
 - specifically for Hispanic parents?
 - specifically for parents of special education students?

14. To the best of your knowledge, about how many special education students do you think your organization reaches at the present time? _____

• Do you think your organization has the potential to reach:

_____ a few more? _____ many more? _____ very many more?

15. To the best of your knowledge, describe your organization's current relationship with (other):

• Rehabilitation organizations

• Parent/Community advocacy organizations

• Child Rights advocacy organizations

• Educational institutions

16. Overall, what would you and your organization like to do for special education students, or their parents, with respect to vocational or career matters that you are not doing now?

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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS
Co-Trainer Followup Survey

Now that the "Parents as Career Educators" program cycle is over, we are interested in your reactions and experiences. To allow you the greatest possible leeway in describing the program as you and the parents in your group experienced it, we are asking several open-ended questions. Please answer each with as many specific details, anecdotes, and illustrations as necessary to convey the flavor of the program. We would appreciate it if you would include any other information that you think is relevant to an evaluation of the program. Use the backs of the pages if you need additional space.

Some of the questions, particularly those pertaining to the actions of the parents in groups or to the schools' reactions to the program may not be applicable to you. If they are not, please indicate this for each non-applicable item.

Your name: _____

School or organization: _____

PERSONAL IMPACT

1. As a result of participating in the program, what did you learn about yourself in terms of leading small groups? (Please be specific in describing your own strengths and weaknesses in this regard.)
2. In what ways (if any) did the program change your preconceptions about the needs and interests of parents of handicapped high school students?
3. Please describe at least one thing you learned or came to appreciate about minority groups and/or Hispanic parents with limited English skills.
4. Other than in the workshop with parents, have you tried, or do you intend to try, any of the career education exercises/activities that comprised the program?

- If so, please specify with whom and describe how well it was received. (Be sure to indicate any similar work you may have done with student groups.)
5. Has your involvement in this program generated any new plans or activities that you are interested in trying in the future? (Please describe.)
 6. As a result of your experience with this program, how worthwhile do you feel it is to involve parents of handicapped students in their child's career education? (Please explain.)

EFFECTS ON PARENTS

1. As a result of the program, have you had increased contact or different interactions with any of the parent participants, individually or as a group? (Include, for example, whether there has been a change in the number coming to the school to meet with you and/or a change in the type or kind of information they are seeking.)
2. Please describe any attempts the group of parents you led has made to meet together again after the program.
3. As a group, have your parent participants undertaken any projects to further either the education of their children or their own involvement in school affairs?
4. To the best of your knowledge as a result of participation in the program, have any of your parents made a change:
 - In their own educational plans/activities (e.g., taken a course, enrolled in school)?

- In their own career/occupational plans/activities (e.g., changed or considered changing jobs)?
 - In their involvement with other organizations, either Hispanic or agencies that work with handicapped persons?
 - In their involvement with school staff and/or administrators?
5. Have you observed any changes in the attitudes or behaviors of students of the parents who participated that you would attribute to the program?

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

1. As a result of the program has there been any changes in the actions or intentions of the administrators of your agency/organization
- for general parents groups?
 - specifically for Hispanic parents with limited English skills?
 - specifically for parents of handicapped students?

2. As a result of the program, have you and/or your organization formed new affiliations or relationships with outside agencies or organizations, or do you intend to do so? (Please describe any meetings or new contacts and procedures that have been or will be established.)

GENERAL REACTIONS

1. Looking back at the training/planning meetings held prior to the session for parents, list the:

Major strengths:

Major weaknesses:

2. Please describe the ways each of the following general techniques or strategies contributed to the overall effectiveness of the program:

- The presentations to the large group:

- The resource table opportunities:

- The small group activities:

- The use of paired co-trainers:

- The English/Spanish translations:
 - The social time:
 - The print materials:
3. In your opinion, what one aspect of the program stands out as most effective/successful?
4. In your opinion, what one aspect of the program was least effective/least successful and/or most in need of strengthening for the future?
5. Please use the space below to describe other outcomes of the program as they relate to the impact on:
- Students
 - Parent participations
 - English speakers
 - Limited-English speakers
 - Other parents
 - Your organization/agency
 - Yourself

Thank you for completing this form.
Use the enclosed envelope to return it to us by January 31, 1983.

(M) (X)

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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS: SURVEY

So that we can make this program better, we need to know about some of the things parents do and think. This is a long questionnaire about some of the things you do and think about children, schools, and careers.

Try to answer each question. Read it carefully, but quickly. Show your answer by putting a check (✓) in the space that best describes you. We have asked for your name and for your child's school so that we can tell how you feel now and at the end of the program. Your answers are confidential and no one will see them except program staff.

The questions are about your child in high school with a disability. Even though you may have more than one child, try to answer the questions with that child in mind. Thank you.

1. Please decide if you think this statement is true or false. If you don't know, check the last column. Please put a check (✓) in the column to show your answer.

	FALSE	TRUE	DON'T KNOW
The law says the high school must give children with disabilities special activities			
Once every year, the school must evaluate my child's special needs			
There are organizations that offer special job training for children with disabilities			
If I am not happy with my child's special school program, there are definite things I can do			
People with disabilities have a harder time choosing a career than people without any			
Some jobs that used to be closed to people with special needs are no longer closed to them			
I can name 2 organizations that help handicapped people			
An employer has the right to ask for references			

2. In this question we are interested in how often you do each of the things on the list. Read each item and check (✓) whether you do it a lot, sometimes, not often, or if you plan to do it in the future. Keep in mind your high school child with a disability.

	I DO IT OFTEN	I DO IT SOMETIMES	I DO IT NOT OFTEN	I PLAN TO DO IT
Work with school people to plan my child's IEP				
Go to the school's meeting for parents				
Make suggestions about what my child should do after high school				
Go to community organizations to get help for my child				
Try to learn about what special rights my child has because of his or her disability				
Show my child books and magazines about careers				
Try to get my child to tell me about what she or he likes or is good at				
Talk to people about the right kind of job for my child				

3. In this question we want to know what you believe about certain things. Put a check (✓) in the column to show if you strongly disagree with the statement, if you disagree a little, if you agree a little, or if you agree strongly.

	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DISAGREE A LITTLE	AGREE A LITTLE	AGREE STRONGLY
By the time a child is in high school, parents cannot do much to help her or him				
It is the school's responsibility to help my child plan a career				
Because of her or his disability, my child needs special help from the school				
Once a child decides on a career she or he should stick to it				
It's best for a child to go on a job interview alone				
Friends and family are the best source for finding a job				
It's hard to get your own child to talk about how she or he is doing in school				
What a person likes should be considered in the career she or he chooses				
Because of my child's special problems, there are only a few careers open to her or him				
Children should decide on a career by themselves				

4. How many children 13 years old or younger do you have living at home? Write in a number: _____
5. Compared to your other children, check to show how much of a problem your high school child with a disability has been:
 _____ Much more of a problem _____ About the same problem _____ Less of a problem
6. What is the name of the high school your child with a disability attends? Write in the name: _____
7. Please write in your name: _____

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire

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PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS: END OF PROGRAM STUDY

We would like to know about some of the things you do and think. We would also like to know how you feel about the program and if there are new things you learned.

The questions are about your child with a disability in high school. Even though you may have more than one child, try to answer the questions with that child in mind. Thank you.

1. Please decide if you think this statement is true or false. If you don't know, check the last column. Please put a check (✓) in the column to show your answer.

	FALSE	TRUE	DON'T KNOW
The law says the high school must give children with disabilities special activities			
Once every year, the school must evaluate my child's special needs			
There are organizations that offer special job training for children with disabilities			
If I am not happy with my child's special school program, there are definite things I can do			
People with disabilities have a harder time choosing a career than people without any			
Some jobs that used to be closed to people with special needs are no longer closed to them			
I can name 2 organizations that help handicapped people			
An employer has the right to ask for references			
I am better able to help my child to decide on a career because of this program			
Because of this program, I know more about the kinds of jobs that are right for my handicapped child			

2. In this question we are interested in how often you do each of the things on the list. Read each item and check (✓) whether you do it a lot, sometimes, not often, or if you plan to do it in the future. Keep in mind your high school child with a disability.

	I DO IT OFTEN	I DO IT SOMETIMES	I DO IT NOT OFTEN	I PLAN TO DO IT
Work with school people to plan my child's IEP				
Go to the school's meeting for parents				
Make suggestions about what my child should do after high school				
Go to community organizations to get help for my child				
Try to learn about what special rights my child has because of his or her disability				
Show my child books and magazines about careers				
Try to get my child to tell me about what she or he likes or is good at				
Talk to people about the right kind of job for my child				

3. Please check (✓) to show how useful you found each of these things we did during the meetings.

THINGS WE DID	NOT VERY USEFUL	A LITTLE USEFUL	VERY USEFUL
Talking to people from the high schools and colleges			
Talking to people from other organizations			
Talking with other parents about our experiences			
The things we got to read			
Meeting in a large group			
Talking in the small groups			
Asking questions about our own child			

4. In this question we want to know what you believe about certain things. Put a check (✓) in the column to show if you strongly disagree with the statement, if you disagree a little, if you agree a little, or if you agree strongly.

	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DISAGREE A LITTLE	AGREE A LITTLE	AGREE STRONGLY
By the time a child is in high school, parents cannot do much to help her or him				
It is the school's responsibility to help my child plan a career				
Because of her or his disability, my child needs special help from the school				
Once a child decides on a career she or he should stick to it				
It's best for a child to go on a job interview alone				
Friends and family are the best source for finding a job				
It's hard to get your own child to talk about how she or he is doing in school				
What a person likes should be considered in the career she or he chooses				
Because of my child's special problems, there are only a few careers open to her or him				
Children should decide on a career by themselves				

5. Please use a check (✓) to show how you feel about each of these statements.

	NO	YES
I would recommend this program to another parent		
This program showed me there are people and organizations to help my child find a job		
I tried some of the activities we did with my child		
I contacted organizations that sent people to the meetings		
I signed up for the Cornell University training program		
I agree with what the school says is my child's disability		

6. What new thing did you learn about your child through this program?

7. What is your child's disability?

8. What kind of work do you think your child can do?

9. Please write in your name _____

Use the envelope to mail this to us. (No stamp is needed).

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.

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Graduate School and University Center
City University of New York

PARENTS AS CAREER EDUCATORS: END-OF-SESSION RATING FORM, 2 3 (4) 5

Now that today's meeting is over, we would like to know how you feel about the things we did so that we can make them better. Your opinion is important to us. Please answer all questions honestly. Your answers are confidential.

The questions are about your child in high school who has a disability. Even though you may have more than one child, try to answer the questions with that high school child in mind.

1. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was:
☐ Not very worthwhile ☐ A little worthwhile ☐ Very worthwhile
2. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was:
☐ Not very interesting ☐ A little interesting ☐ Very interesting
3. Check (✓) to show if today's speakers were:
☐ Not very good ☐ Just o.k. ☐ Very good
4. Check (✓) to show how many ideas you got that you can try out at home:
☐ Not very many ☐ A few ☐ A lot
5. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was:
☐ Too long ☐ Too short ☐ Just about right
6. Would you recommend today's meeting to a friend? ☐ No ☐ Yes
7. Please use a check (✓) to show how useful you found each of the things we did or talked about today. Your check (✓) will show us what was not very useful, a little useful, or very useful to you.

THINGS WE DID:	NOT VERY USEFUL	A LITTLE USEFUL	VERY USEFUL
Talking to people from the high schools and colleges			
Talking to the people from other organizations			
Talking with other parents about our experiences			
The things we got to read			
Meeting in the large group			
Talking in the small groups			
Asking questions about our child			

8. Please use a check (✓) to show how much you learned today about each of the things on the list. Your check (✓) will show us if you did not learn much, if you learned a little, or if you learned a lot today.

THINGS WE LEARNED:	DID NOT LEARN MUCH	LEARNED A LITTLE	LEARNED A LOT
What the schools should do for students with a disability			
What other organizations do for students with a disability			
Where I can get help for my child's problems			
Things I can do at home to help my child choose a career			
How to work with other parents			
How to work with schools to help my child			
How to work with other organizations to help my child			
The many kinds of jobs that are available			
What people have to do to have the career they want			
What kind of schooling there is for different careers			
Things about careers to tell my child			
What businesses look for in workers			
How to help my child learn about his or her interests and abilities			

9. Please write in the one thing you thought was best about today. _____

10. Please write in the one thing that was worst about today. _____

11. If you want to, use this space to tell us how to make this program better.

Thank you for filling out this form

Parent Teacher Association

Adlai E. Stevenson High School

1980 LAFAYETTE AVENUE • BRONX, N. Y. 10473

April 5, 1983

Dear Mr. Katz,

I attended and successfully completed the course "Parent As Career Educators", and "Effective Speaking and Community Leadership", last spring.

Since that time I have become PTA. President of Adlai E. Stevenson High School, Bronx, NY and established a good working communication with the Special Education parents, students and staff. Many of our students know me and stop to talk to me from time to time. I think my presence in the school give them a sense of identification.

I have contacted three feeder schools and will be speaking at their PTA May meeting to give a perception of our school. The specialized programs we have including Special Ed. I think it is important for special children to attend their neighborhood school if possible making easy accessibility for parent involvement.

As PTA President, my November 15, 1982 was a "Special Education Presentation". Project RUPO came and Mr Tardala, our Special Ed. Assistant principal spoke on Career Options for non-Diploma candidates. Two-thirds of the parents were Special Ed.

We are holding another workshop on May 12, 1983 @ 1:30pm. I would like you to come.

We will be revising our Constitution and By-Laws on Saturday May 7, 1983, and I hope to include a standing committee for Special Ed. I am also encouraging other parents associations to have a standing committee.

I hope your program continue and expand throughout the country.

Sincerely,
Sarah Cannady Thompson
Sarah Cannady Thompson
PTA President

Parent Teacher Association

Adlai E. Stevenson High School

1980 LAFAYETTE AVENUE • BRONX, N. Y. 10473

April 5, 1983

Dear Mr. Alvarado,

I was a student in the class you taught at Cornell University last spring, (Effective Speaking and Community Leadership). As a result, I have been able to plan, organize, and conduct all my PTA. meetings alone. I have attended other meetings and spoke on behalf of our school. I am vice-chairman of the Youth Committee in Jamie Towers Houses, and I chair those meetings sometimes.

I am at present organizing a PTA at Saint John Vianney School 2141 Seward Ave. Bronx, NY. I have two children attending this school and a third one to start in September. I am pleased to say, our first meeting went well. We have called a second meeting for Election of Officers :

May 9, 1983 @ 7:00pm on Monday. Perhaps you might like to come and observe for the workshop I will be holding in the near future.

Since two-thirds of my parents have little knowledge of Parents Associations. I feel it will be necessary for a parent workshop to be held. I ask your assistance in this matter.

My goal is to create an open line of communication with the understanding, that will encourage cooperation from our parents, to help our school and our children.

Truly yours

Sarah Cannady Thompson
Sarah Cannady Thompson
Parent

8926657 (Telephone)